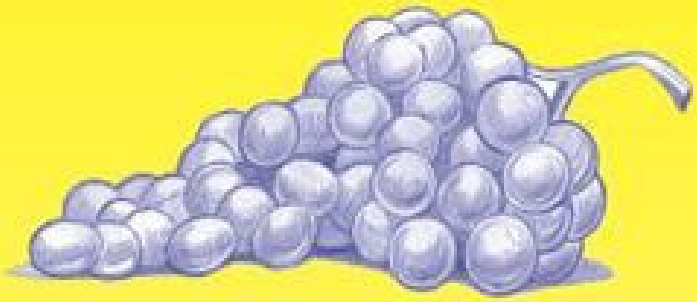
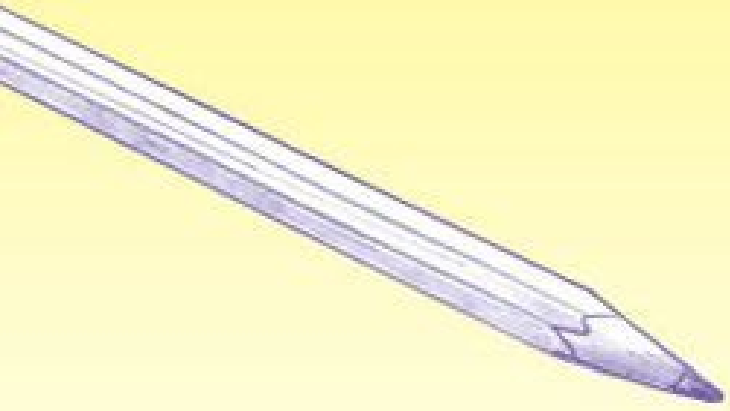
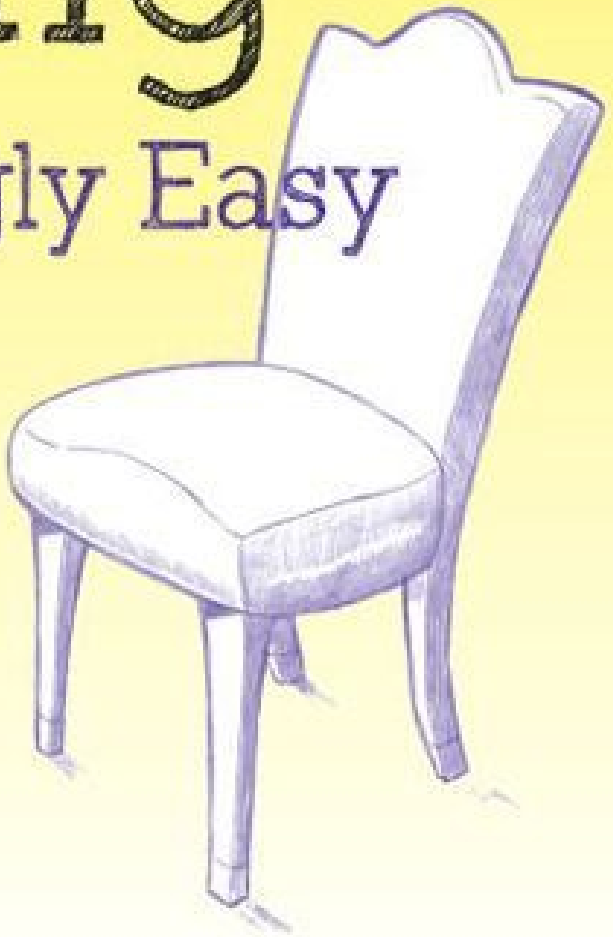


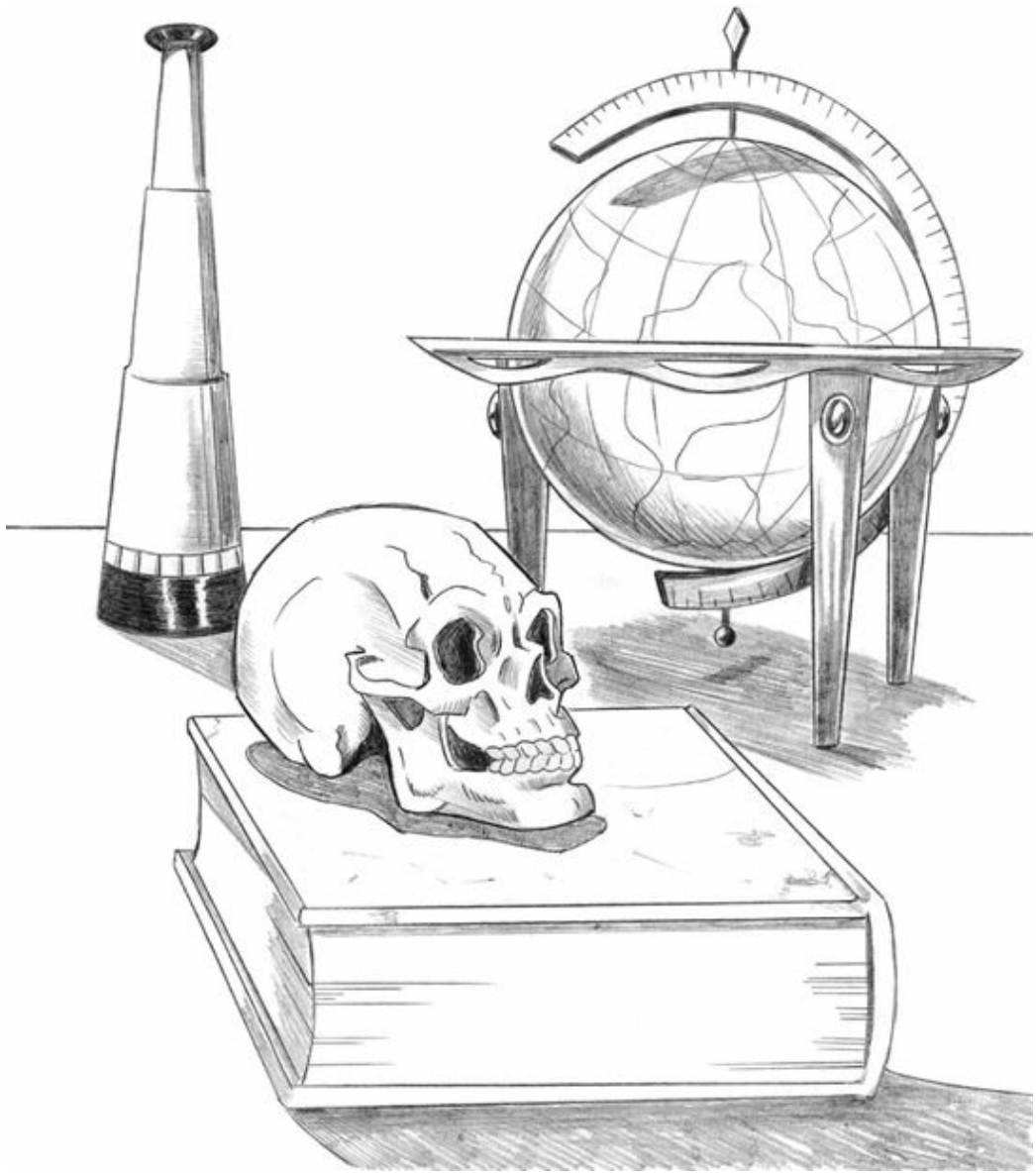
Basic Drawing

Made Amazingly Easy





Christopher Hart



BASIC DRAWING

Made Amazingly Easy

Christopher Hart

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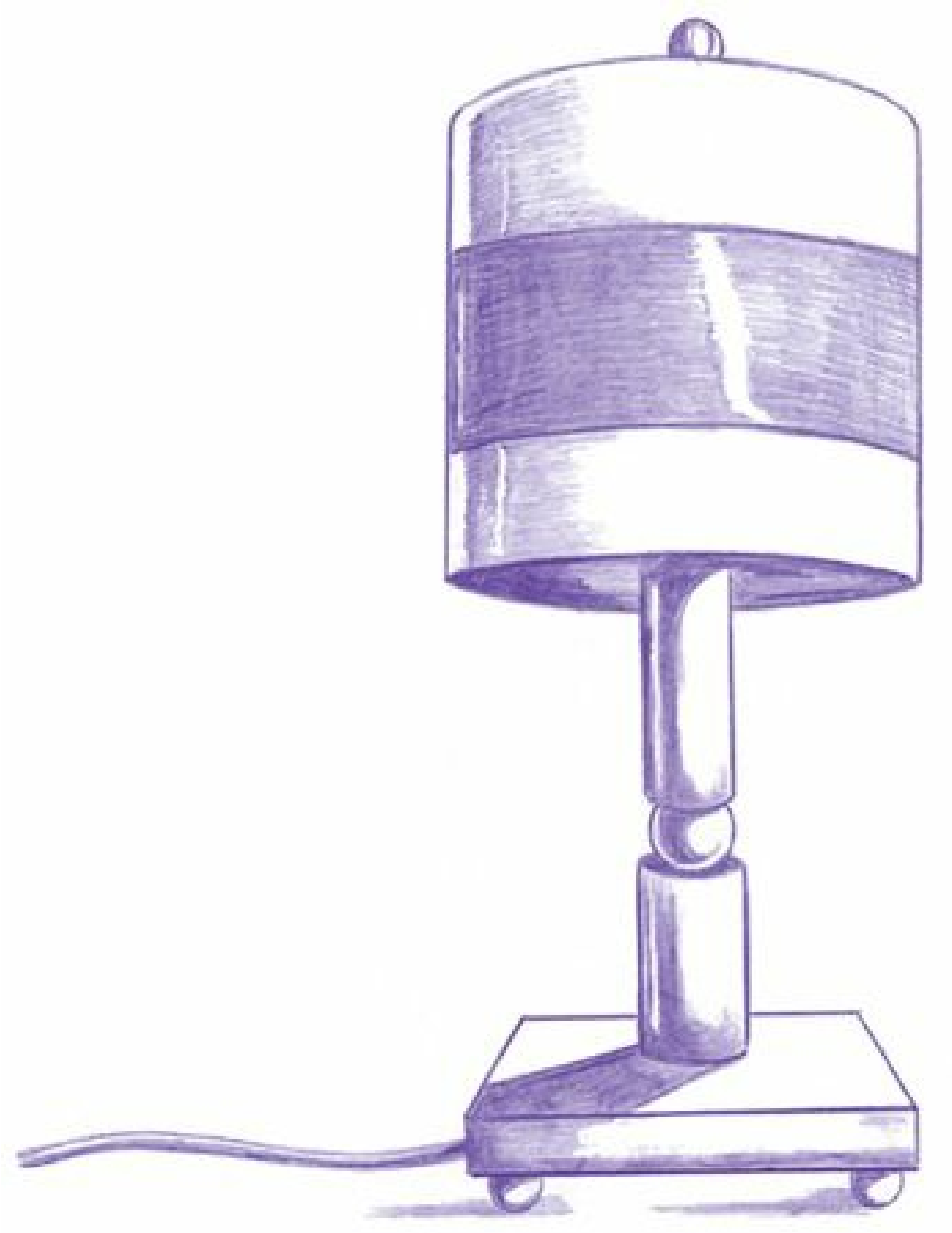

Dedicated to everyone who loves to draw;
also, to my old classmate
and animation buddy, Michael Horowitz

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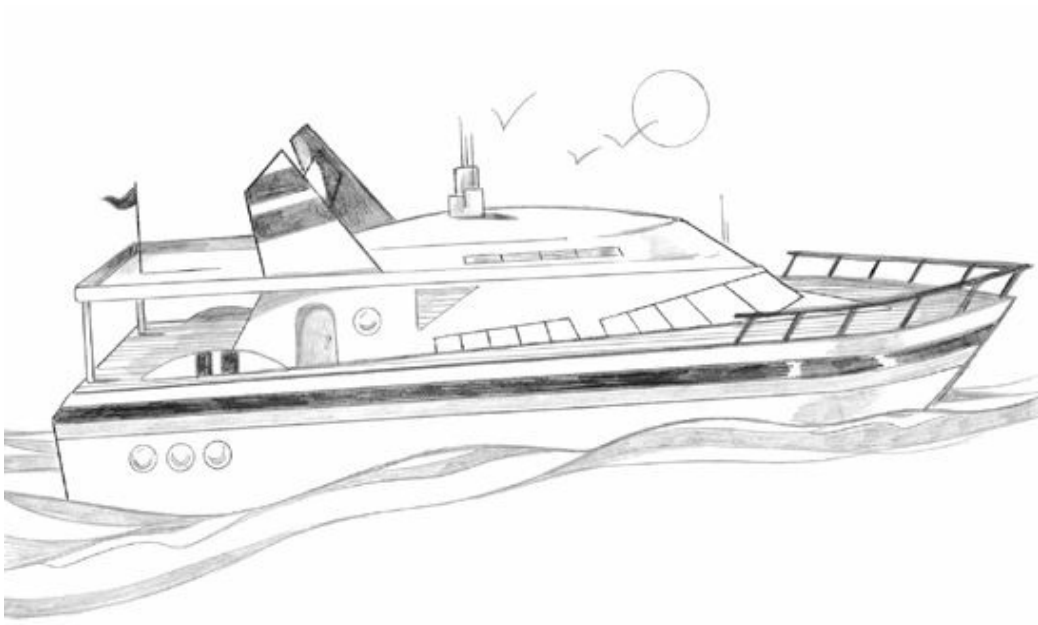

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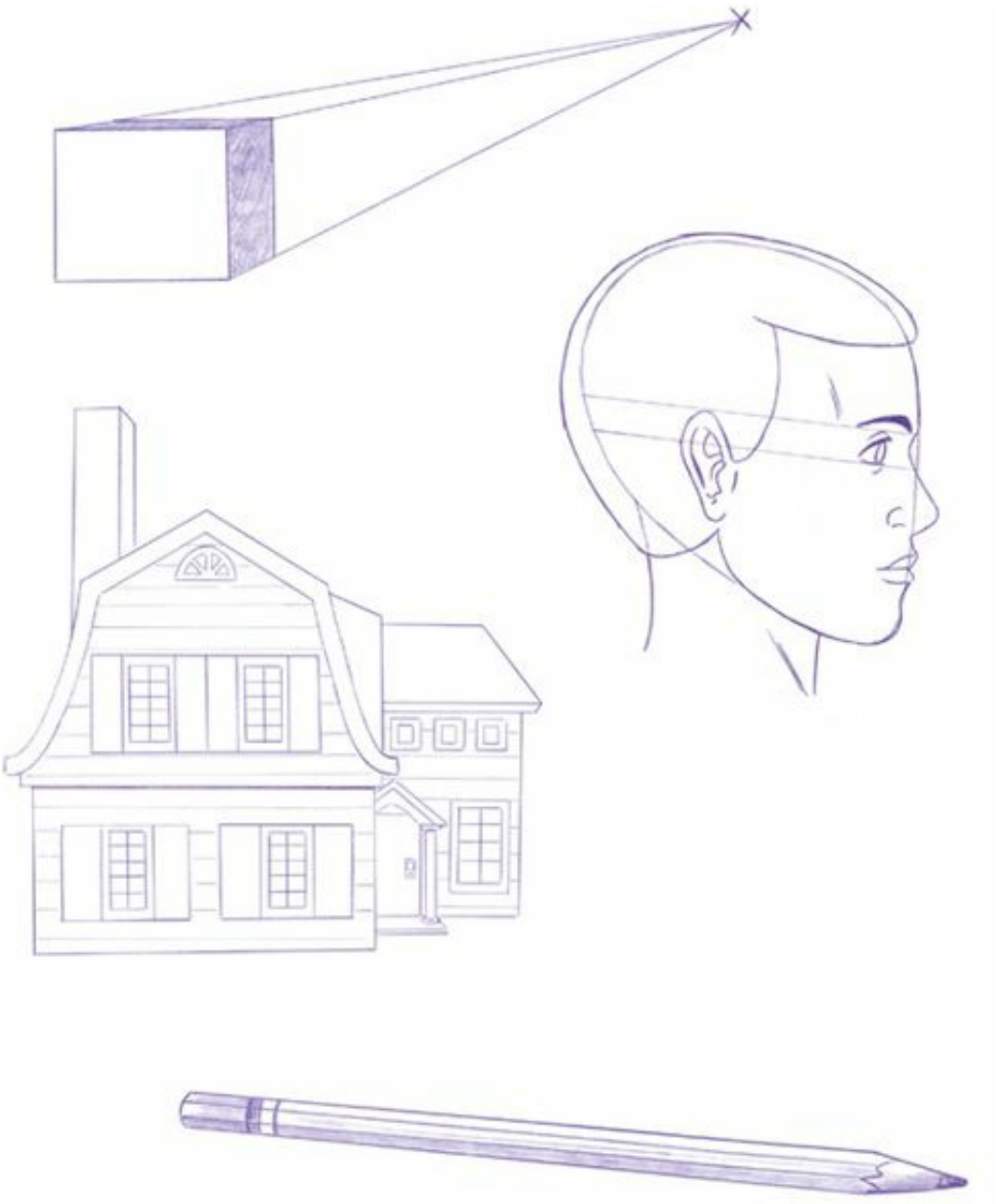


Drawing is a fun and satisfying way to express your creativity, but learning to draw can be intimidating. Naturally, a beginning artist needs a solid foundation in artistic principles, but why can't those principles be clearly explained and illustrated?

Here is a complete drawing book for the beginning artist that focuses on getting you drawing right away, while giving you all the tools you need to build a solid foundation in art. In working through this book, you will learn how to "see" like an artist, in terms of form, line, and shadow. Each chapter gradually builds upon earlier lessons so that the experience of learning to draw is never too challenging. Confidence will replace your earlier doubt as you learn techniques that work, such as how to combine basic geometric and organic shapes to create almost anything, how to add depth and shading to your drawing, and how to handle composition, form, and perspective. Finally, you'll learn to draw the human body as a graceful and expressive figure, perhaps the most fulfilling accomplishment for the beginning artist.

Before reading this book, you may have shied away from, or perhaps never even considered, drawing certain subjects; however, I hope that as you go through these chapters you discover something wonderful—that in addition to improving technically, you're also becoming more creative. How is that possible? Good technique gives you the freedom to draw whatever is in your imagination. It gives you the tools to create. Before, your creativity was limited by your access to good information about technique. But now, in effect, we're about to unleash your creative spirit.

Drawing Materials and Basic Concepts

Before you start exploring your beginning drawing lessons, let's make sure you have all the supplies you're going to need. As an artist, it's important to have your materials at the ready—you don't want to be struck suddenly with inspiration, only to find that you're out of paper or lack the right drawing instrument.

Once you've got your supplies, you'll learn to see the hidden geometric shapes that make up just about any form you wish to draw. Seeing these basic shapes, and how they come together to build objects, is the first secret to easier, better drawing.

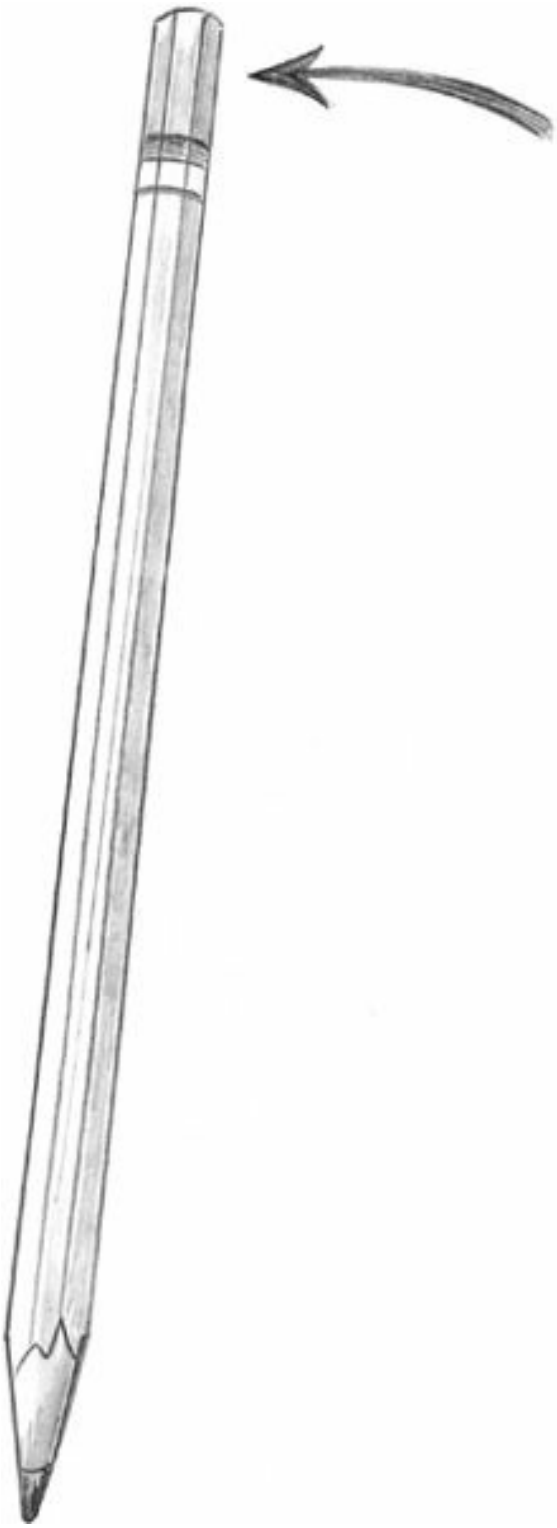
SUPPLIES

Unlike other forms of art, such as painting and sculpture, drawing is inexpensive and mess-free. Whether you're a beginner or a more experienced artist, we all use the same basic list of drawing supplies. You can get these at almost any art supply store, or you can order them online.

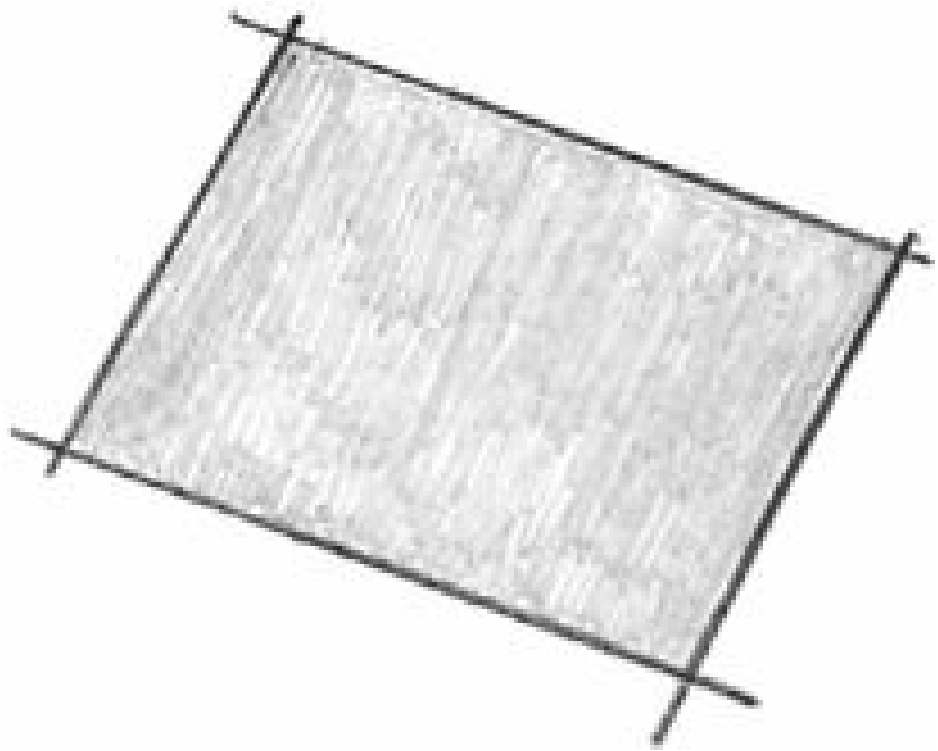
Artist's Pencils

Drawing pencils come in a variety of leads. The hardest ones make the lightest lines, and the softest ones make the darkest lines. The darkest pencils draw the smoothest, but they smudge like crazy and are all but impossible to erase. The lightest draw without any "give" and are so hard that they chisel into the paper, causing a groove that's visible even after you've erased it.

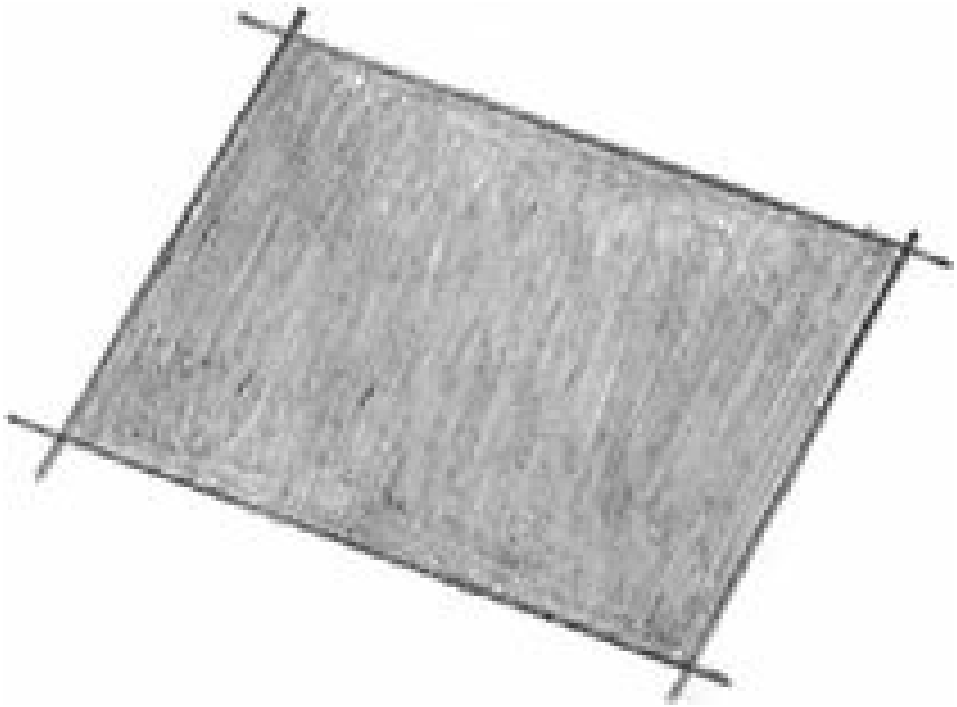
A pencil grade represents two things: the darkness of the lead and its softness. The softer the lead, the smoother the pencil is to draw with. B and HB grade pencils are excellent for sketching and drawing. The HB is a popular sketching pencil and right in the middle of the pack. Next are the F pencils, also excellent, though they may require a little extra pressure on the pencil to produce a dark, black tone. It's recommended to stay in the middle of the spectrum. I recommend picking up a few B, HB, and F pencils to see which you prefer.



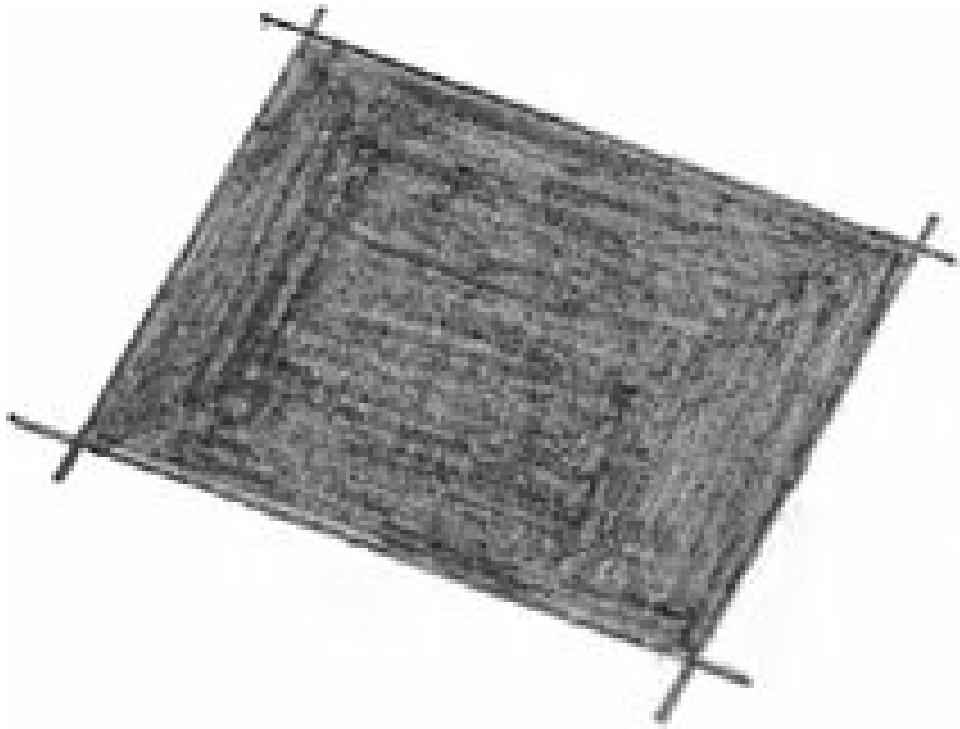
Each pencil-grade notation is found at the top of the pencil. Erasers are absent from professional artist's pencils.



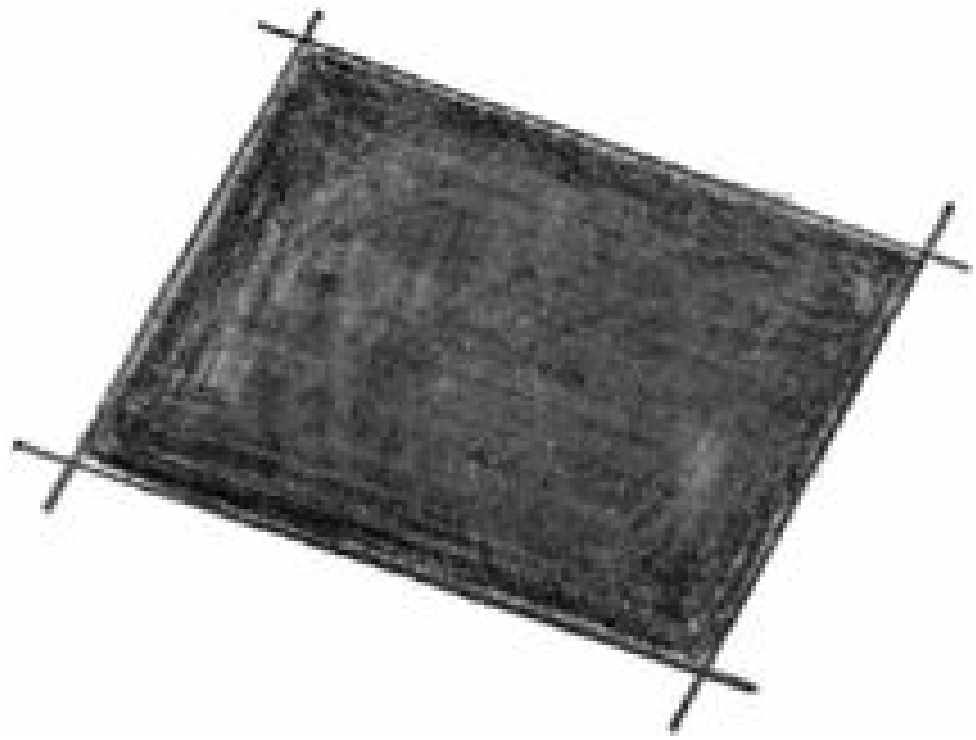
2H: Light tone. Good for initial sketching but will usually have to be drawn over in a darker tone once the drawing is completed. Also a good tone for light shading.



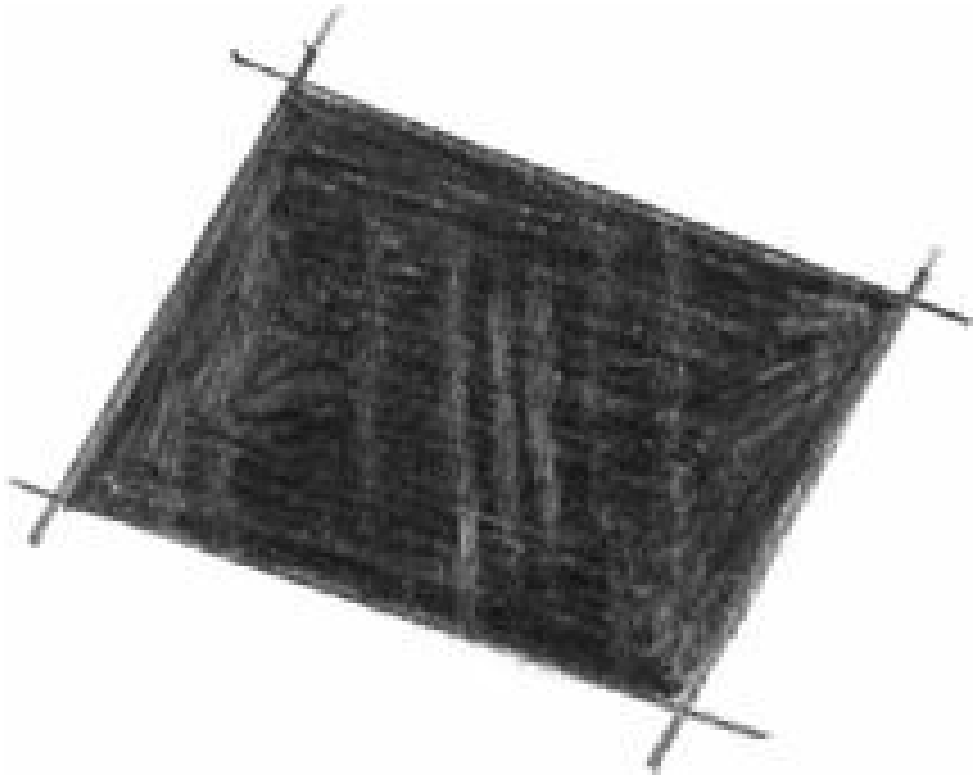
H: Same purpose as 2H, but slightly darker.



F: Creates a nice, dark line but is also capable of light shading. Not easy to create very dark tone with this grade, but it can be done. Can create black when pressed hard.



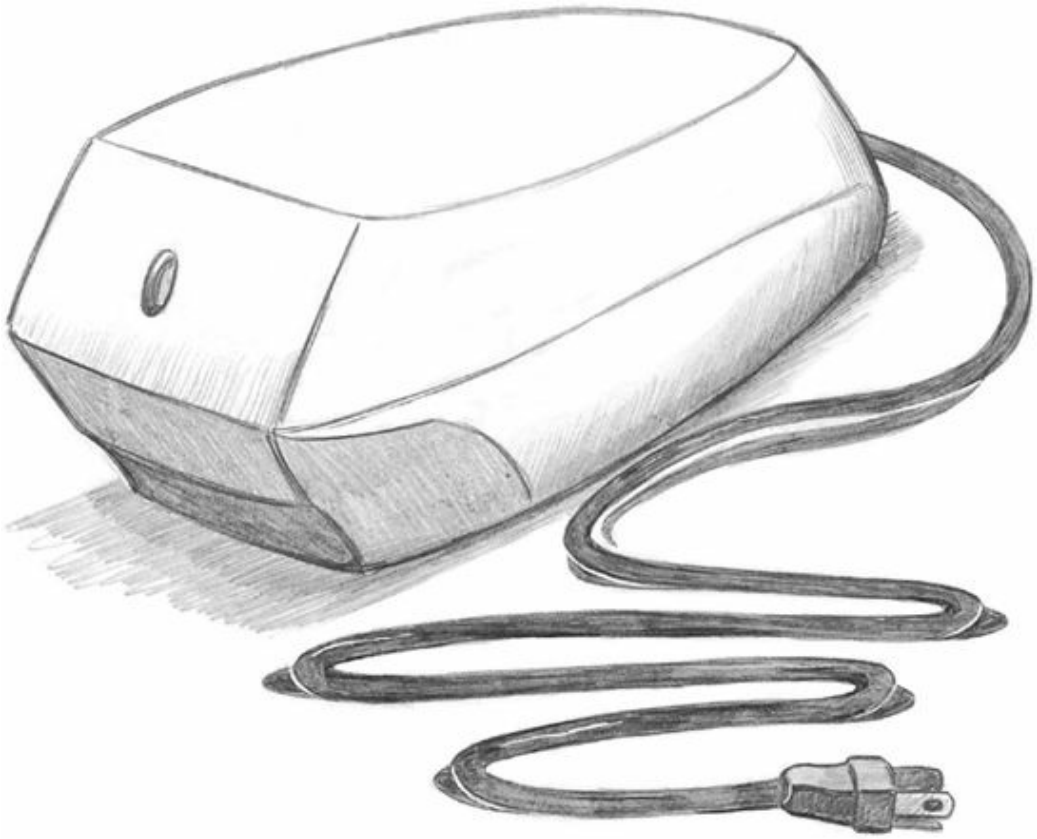
HB: Most commonly used grade. Creates a rich, dark line but can still be effectively erased, albeit with a few minor shadows.



B: Dark line. Gives a smooth sensation for drawing. A good choice when drawing images with long, flowing lines. It is harder to erase and may leave significant shadow lines. Creates solid black areas for shading, but smudging can be a problem.

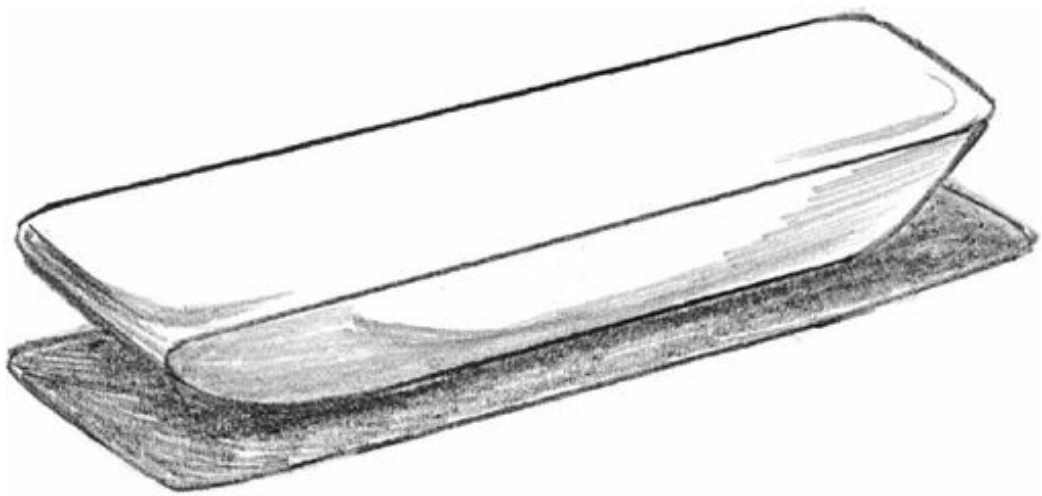
Electric Pencil Sharpener

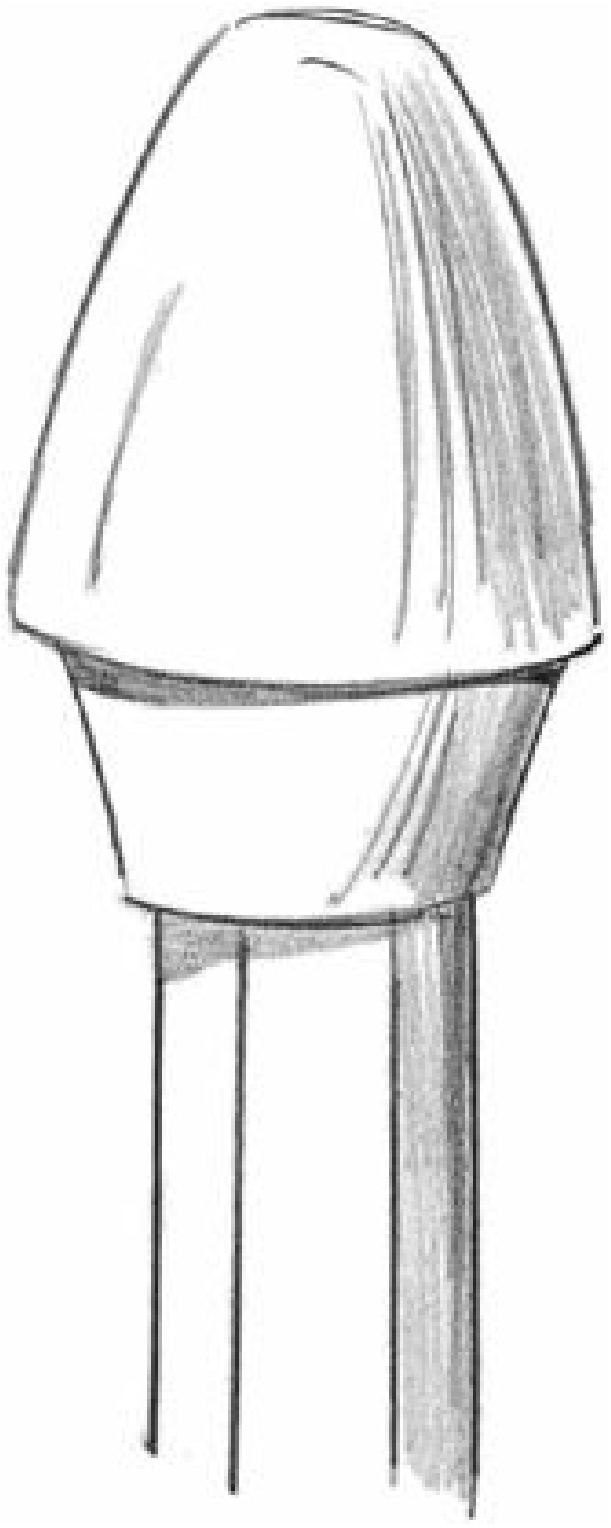
Why electric? With the exception of your pencil, you'll use your sharpener as much as or more than any other tool at your disposal. A hand-twist sharpener will end up driving you insane. I also don't recommend the light, battery-operated models. You'll want something heavy that sits on your desk and doesn't move every time you push a pencil into it.



Erasers

My suggestion is that you buy pencil-tip erasers—dozens of them. You will use these for small corrections in your preliminary sketches. A bigger, handheld eraser is ideal for erasing larger sections.



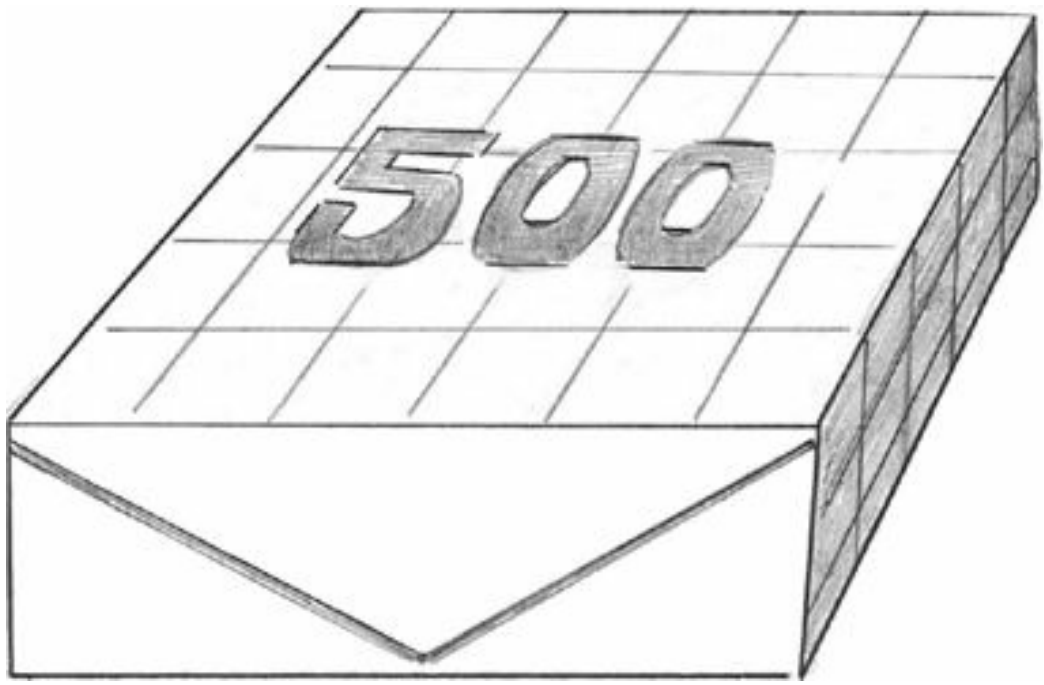


Paper

As far as paper is concerned, go to a chain discount store and buy yourself a ream of 8.5 × 11–inch copy paper. It's what I use. It's easy to find and ridiculously inexpensive—usually 500 sheets, for a little over a penny a sheet.

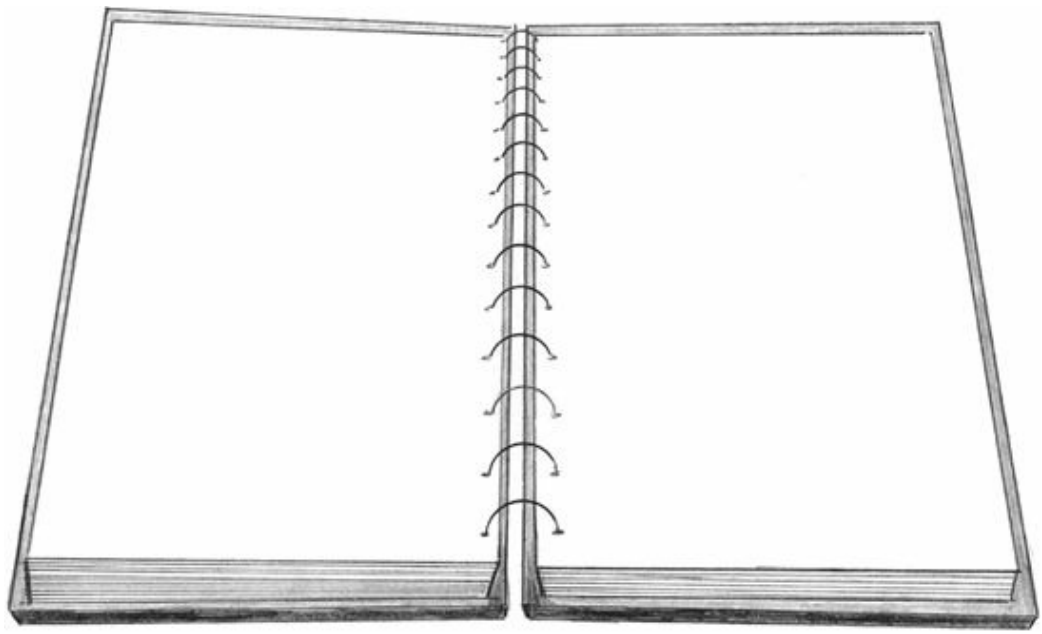
Because the paper is lightweight, it becomes translucent when the light from a light box shines through it. This is helpful when you are polishing up rough sketches.

Art paper from art stores comes in a variety of measurements and thicknesses. The problem with thick, heavy paper is that you cannot see though it on a light box. Typically, it's also expensive, and you don't get many sheets per pad. I would also steer away from paper with tooth or grain, which is more frequently used for charcoal and pastel.



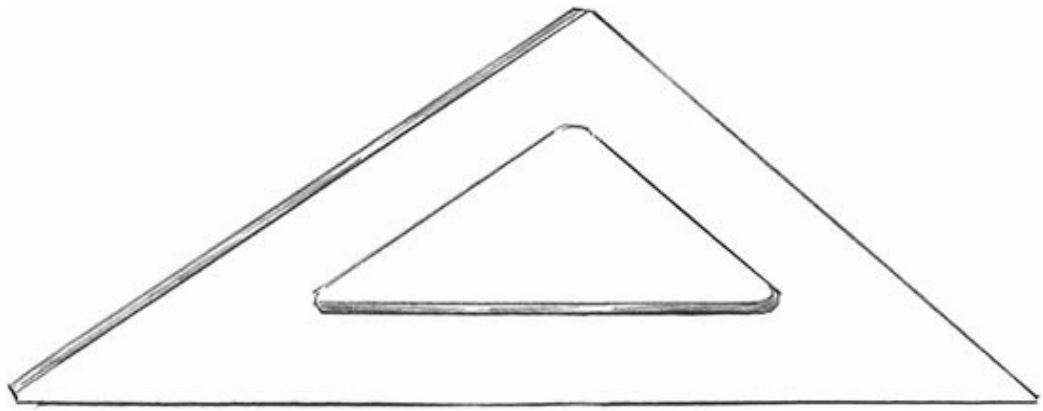
Sketchbooks

If you like drawing in sketchbooks, I suggest using spiral-bound ones. When you open them, they lie flat, which makes them a much easier surface for drawing.



Drafting Triangle

An inexpensive addition to your toolkit is a drafting triangle, also called a triangle ruler, which will allow you to draw straight lines. I prefer the triangle to a traditional ruler. It's less cumbersome and can be rotated quickly into place, whereas a ruler's length gets a bit unwieldy when drawing short, straight lines in tight spaces.

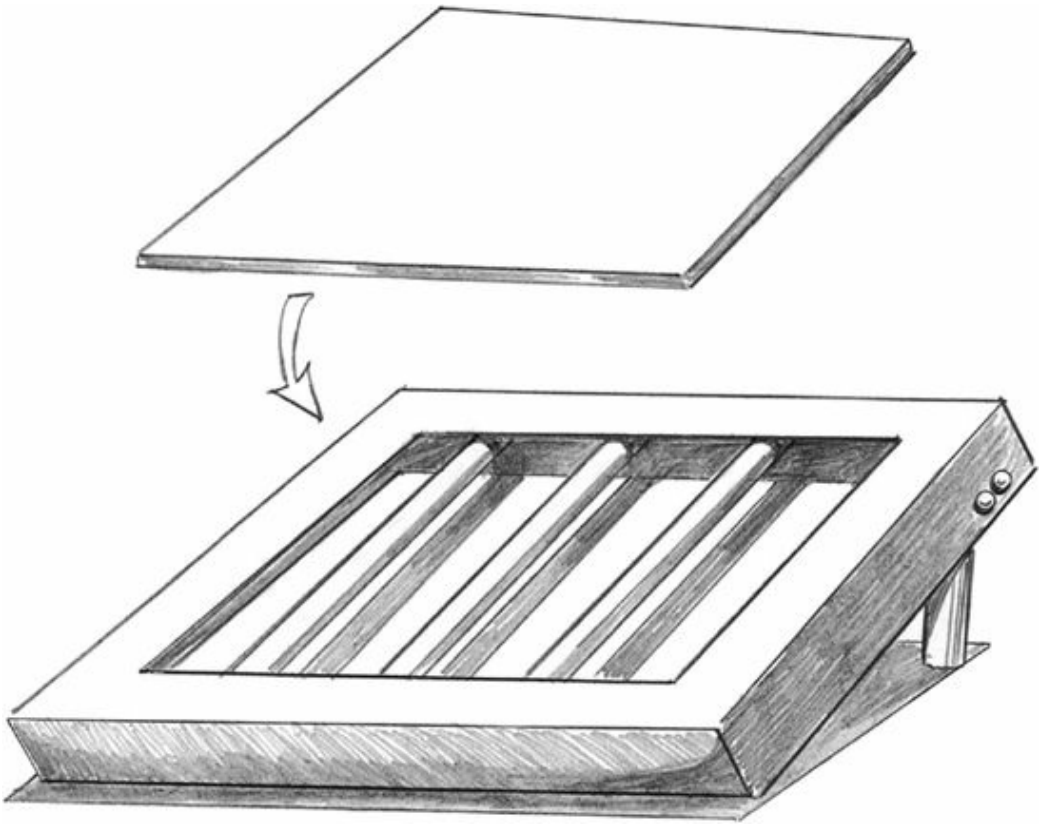


Light Box

You do not need to own a light box; it's something to add to your art "wish list." This is the only tool that could be considered a real expense—but even this is not outrageous. Light boxes run from $50 to over $100. It's essentially a box with lights inside that shine through a translucent plastic cover, which the artist draws on. Here's how it works:

An artist places a rough sketch on top of the light box and then places a clean sheet of paper on top of the rough sketch. Light shines through the transluscent plastic top of the light box, allowing the artist to clearly see the image of the rough sketch through the clean sheet of paper. The artist traces over the rough sketch onto the clean sheet of paper, being careful to omit the unwanted sketchy lines. The final result is a tight, clean, finished drawing.

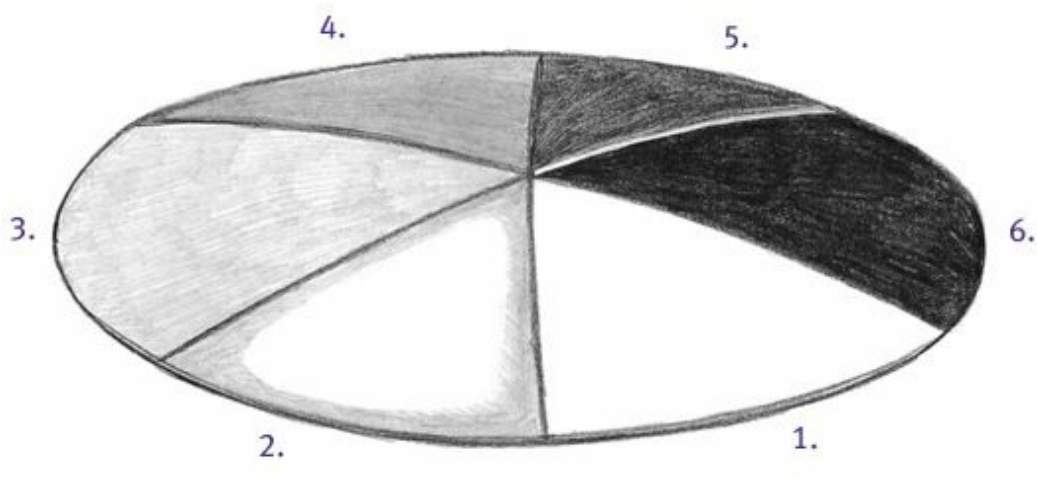
If you do purchase a light box, make sure it's large enough so that it allows you a comfortable amount of space for drawing. You don't want to feel cramped into a tiny area with small dimensions.



THE TONE WHEEL

It's not necessary to select a different pencil every time you want a slightly different tone. By varying the pressure you apply to the pencil, you can get a variety of grays. All of the shades presented on this tone wheel were made by the same HB pencil simply by pressing lighter or harder.

Artists use shading for several reasons: It softens an image's appearance, it makes an image look solid, and it adds variety.



1. White objects tend to look as if they were coming forward in the picture. Darker objects, on the other hand, tend to appear to be receding.
2. A slight gray tone around the edges softens an image. This is also used to give edges a rounded look.
3. Light gray, or "soft gray," is used to depict anything from skin to the sky. It's versatile but also subtle. Not a good choice if you need to make an impact.
4. This is your standard gray tone.
5. Dark gray is sometimes used instead of black; it's excellent for dark shadows.
6. True black is a great look, but it is also a total commitment. And once it's on paper, forget about erasing it.

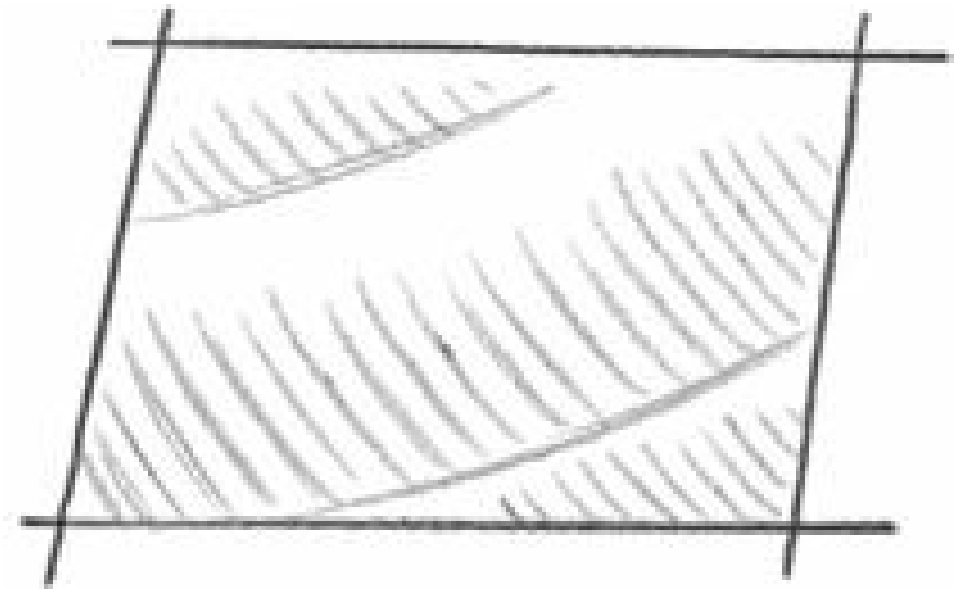
Here you can see a range of tones gradually progressing from white all the way to black.

TEXTURES

By offering a variety of textures, you highlight certain areas of the drawing, avoid visual monotony, and create a greater degree of realism.

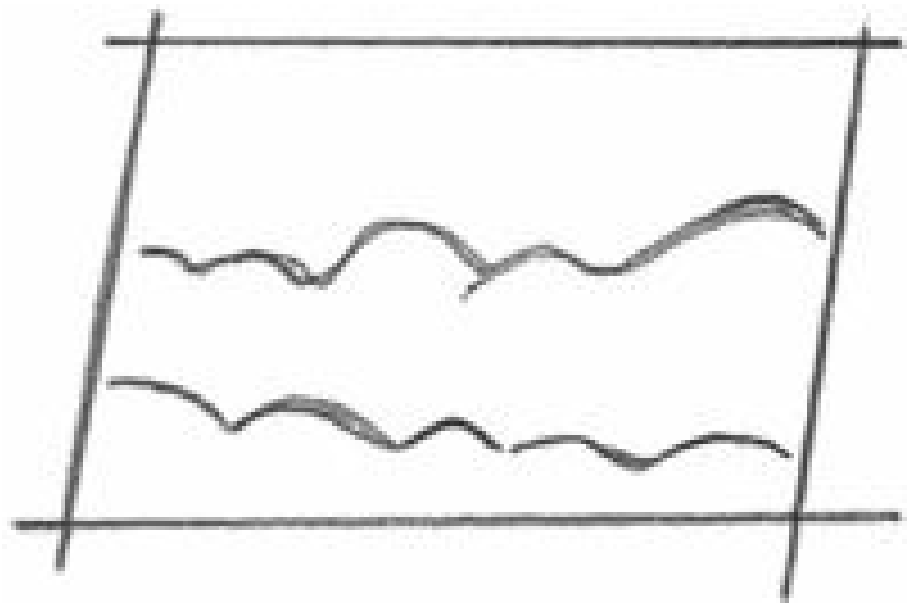
Note the variety of different textures that add cheer to this happy image.

BANANA



Small ridges, made with just a few light, short lines, add texture and bring a drawing to life.

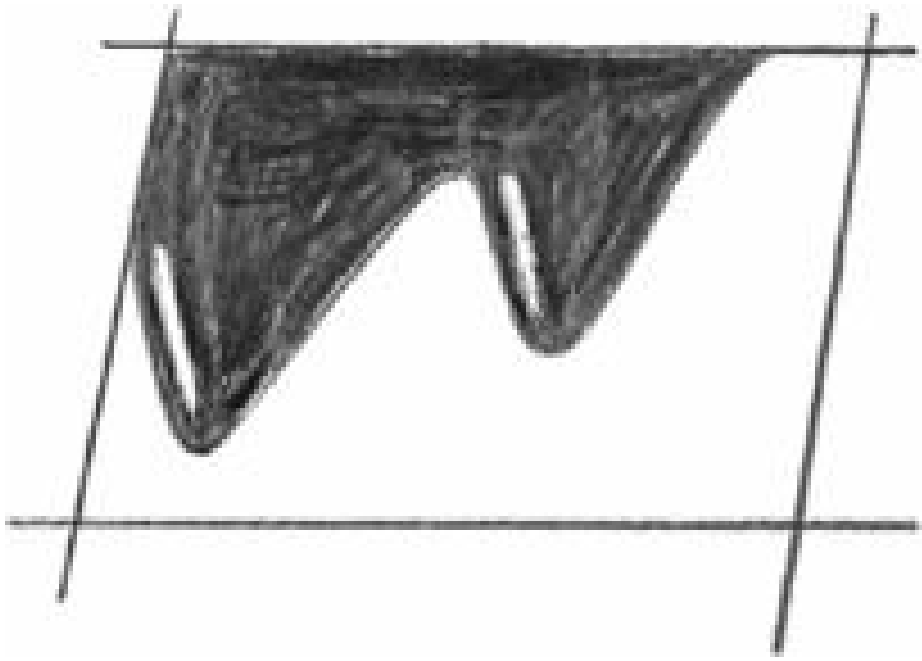
EDGE OF SCOOP



Bumpy texture can be added with a few irregular lines drawn

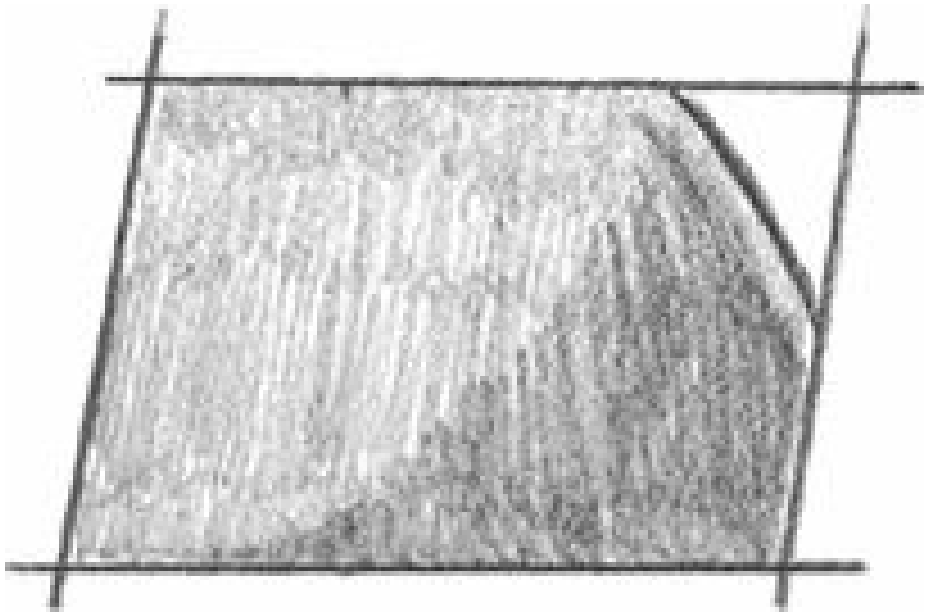
freehand.

SYRUP



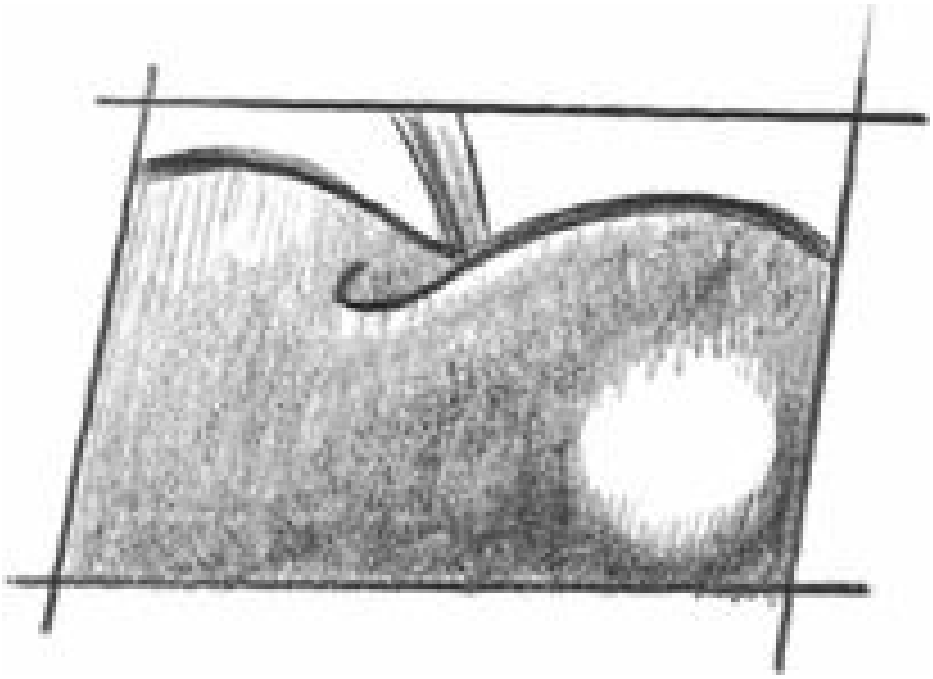
A dark tone with noticeable shine creates a liquid effect.

CHOCOLATE SCOOP



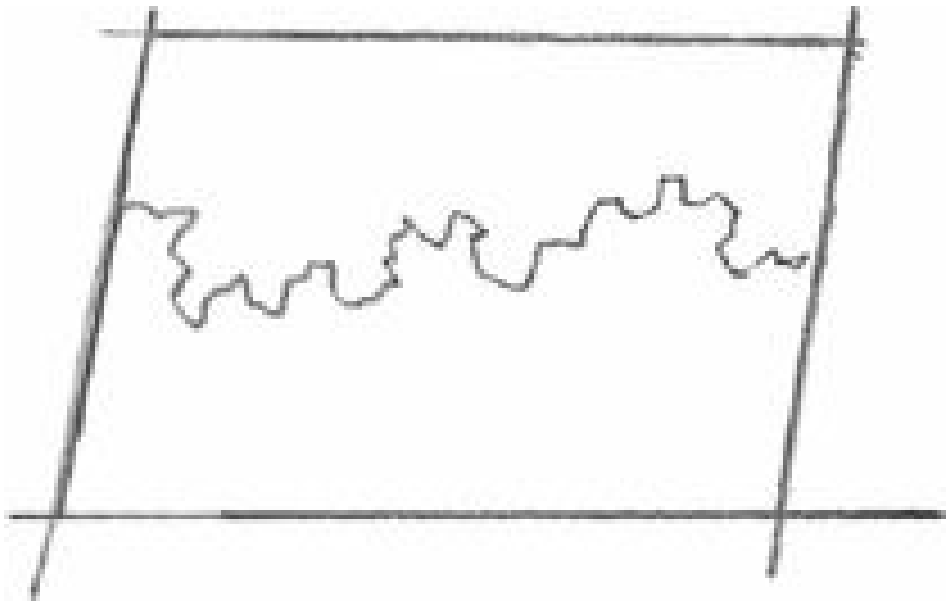
Apply shading from light to dark to give an object more depth.

CHERRY



Shade the object, then erase a small shine section to create a glossy finish.

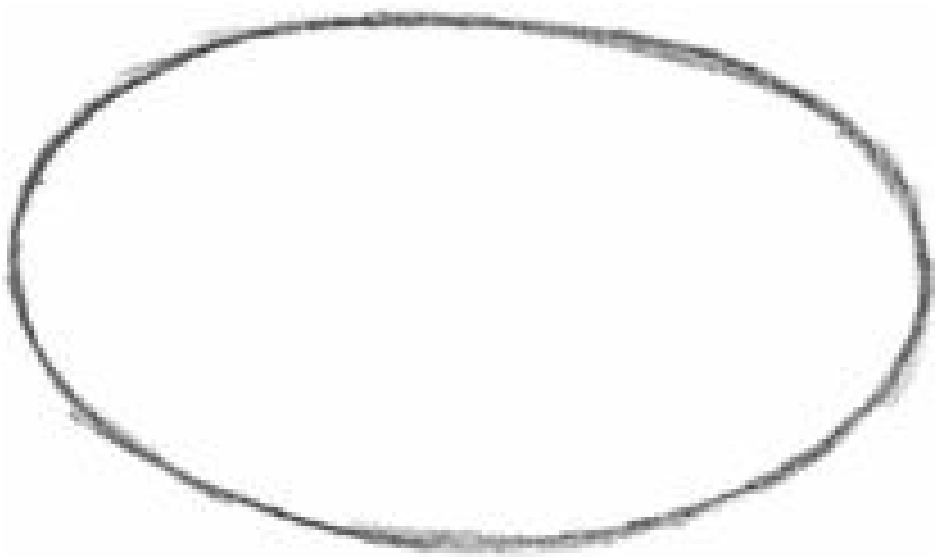
WHIPPED CREAM



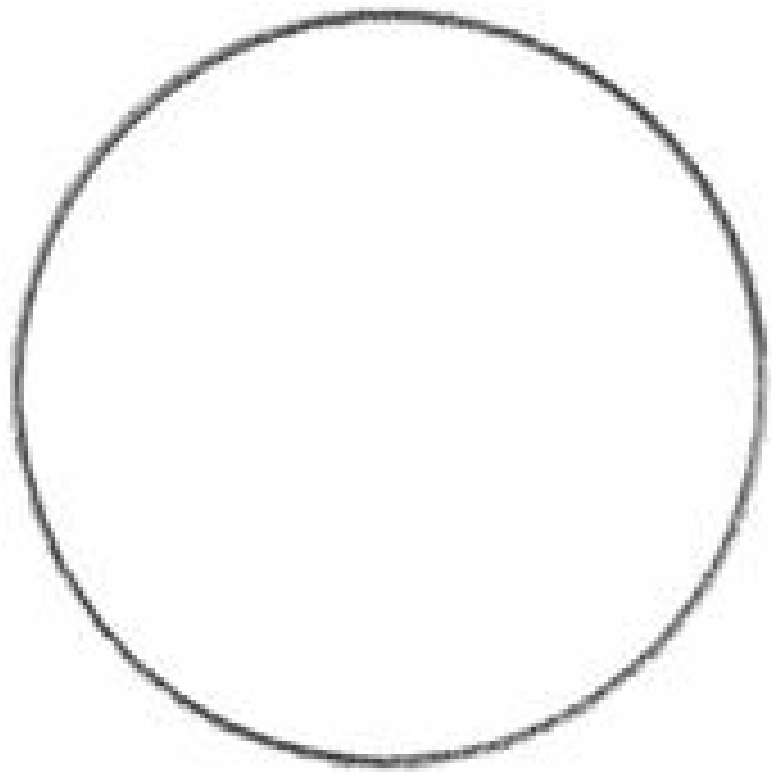
A thin line with a light pencil can create a fluffy effect. This is a good technique for adding clouds to a background.

BASIC SHAPES

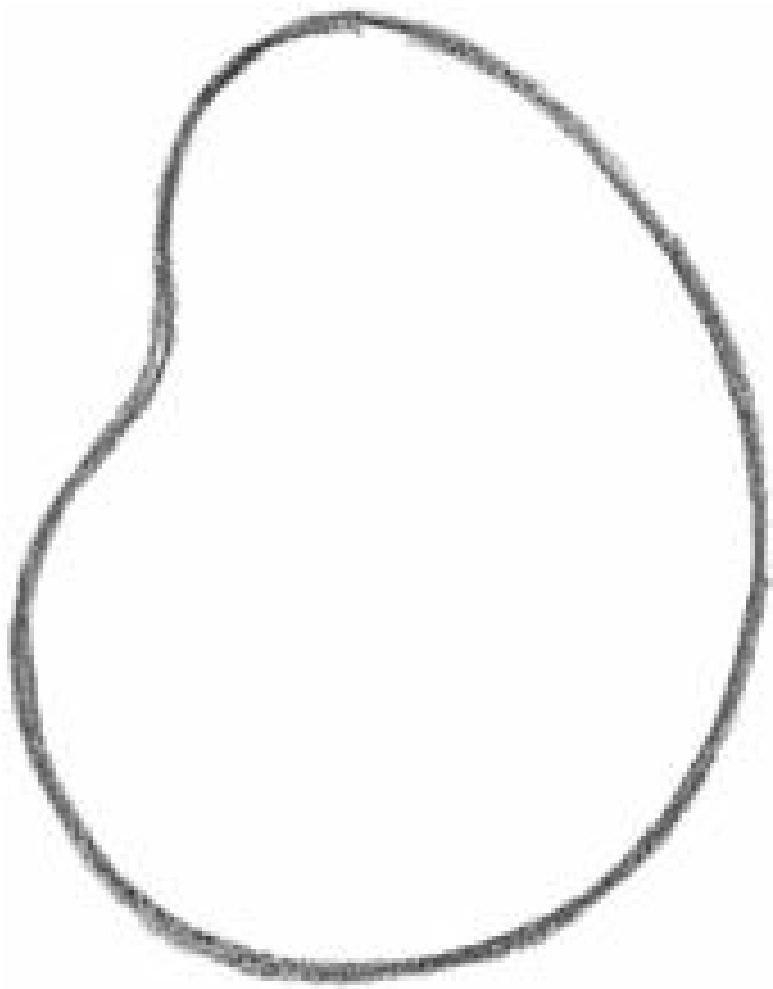
Often, at first glance, a subject will appear too complicated for a beginning artist. The truth is, almost all subjects are made up of shapes as basic as a square or an oval. Sometimes these foundations are called "hidden shapes," because the viewer doesn't even realize that the entire image is built upon them. Once you learn to recognize the basic shapes that are hidden in simple and more complex images, drawing becomes much, much easier. The key is to build onto those simple shapes in an orderly, step-by-step manner. Why is it easier to draw a subject if we first base it on a simple shape? Because basic shapes are easy to draw—therefore, even our complicated drawings will have simple foundations.



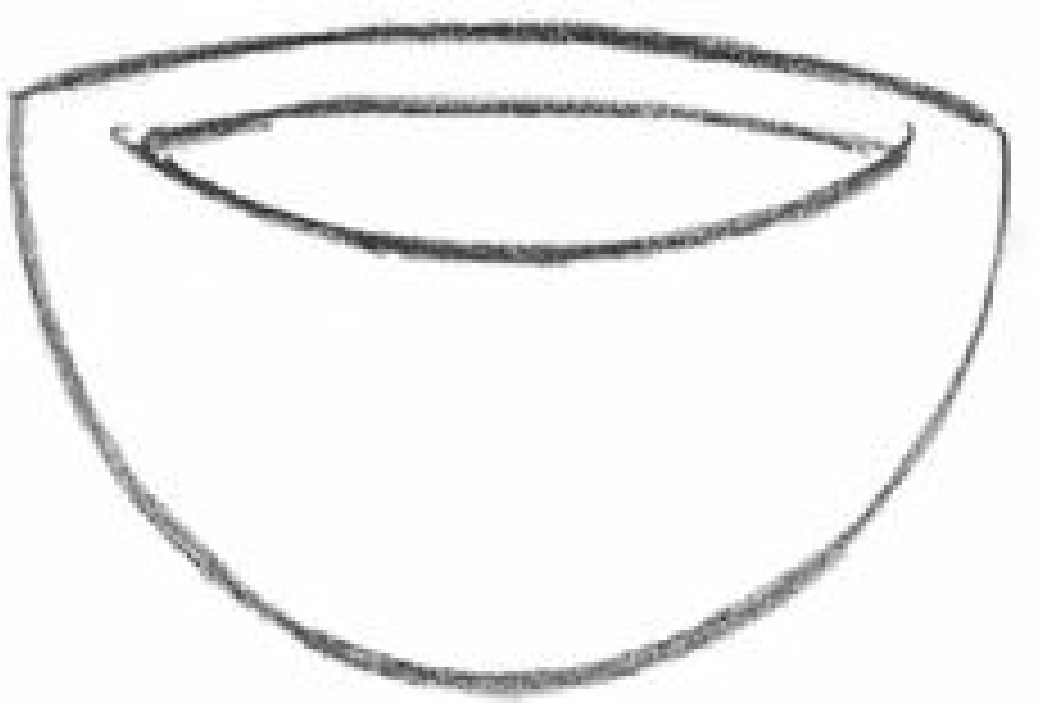
Oval



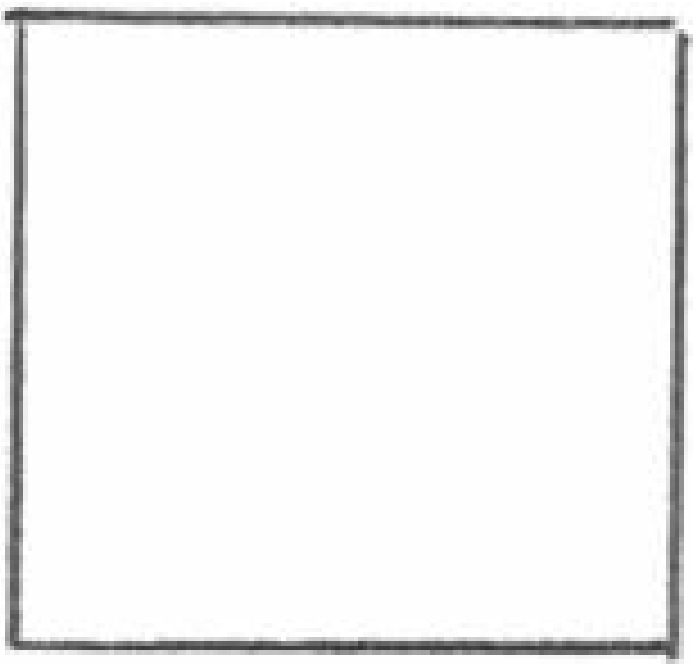
Circle



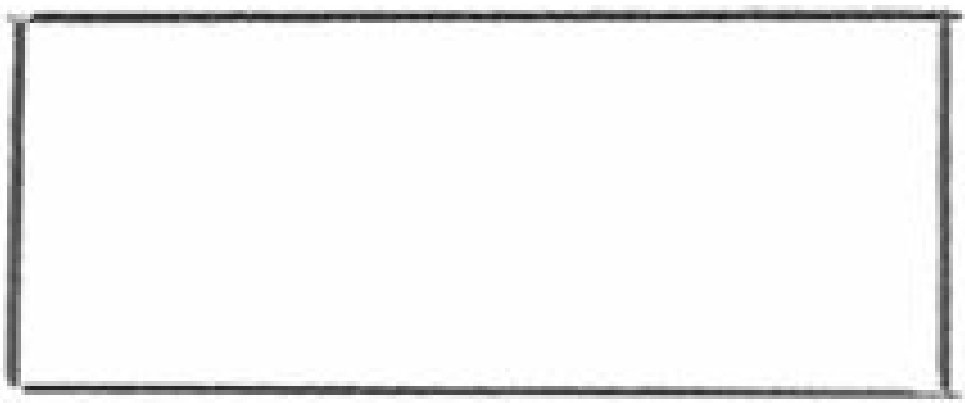
Pear



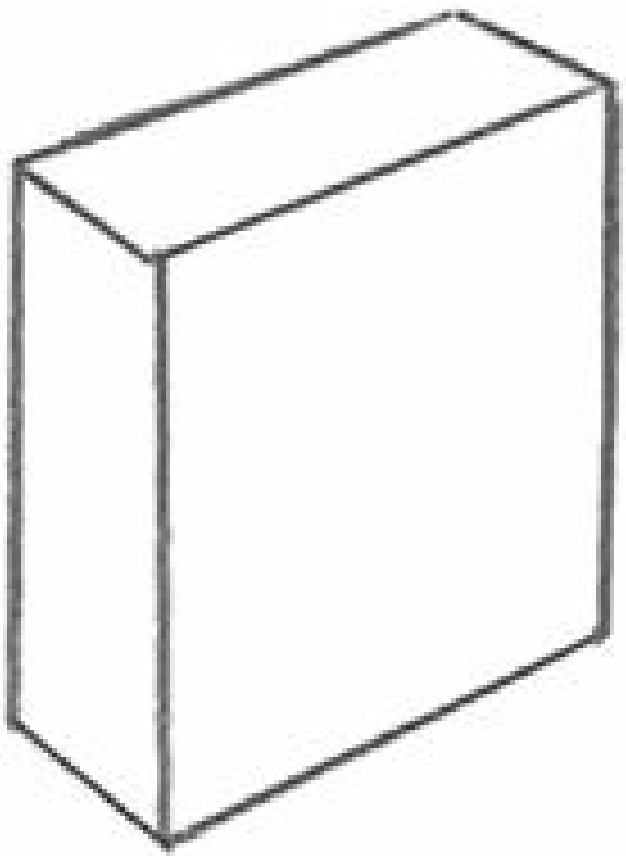
Bowl



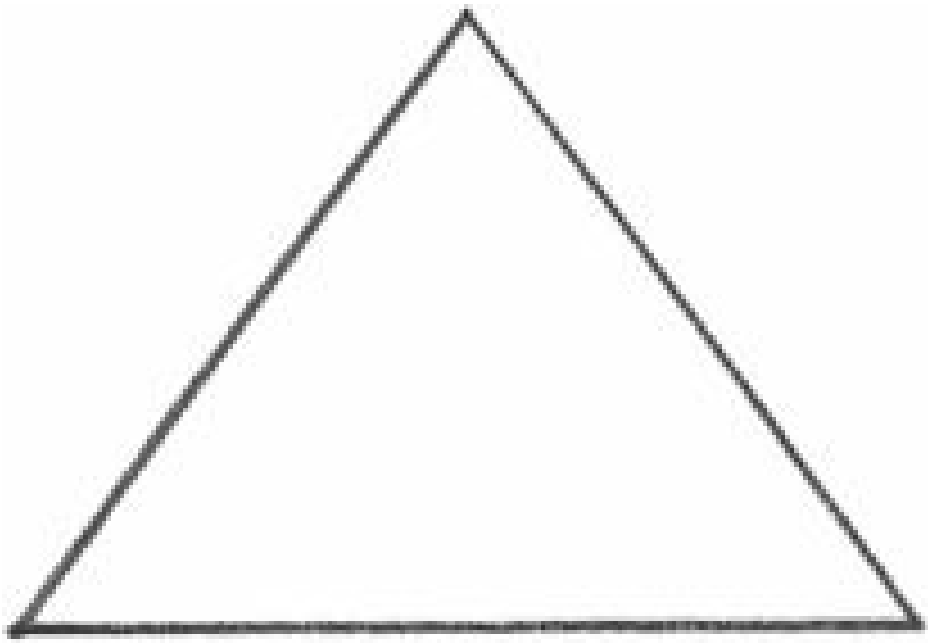
Square



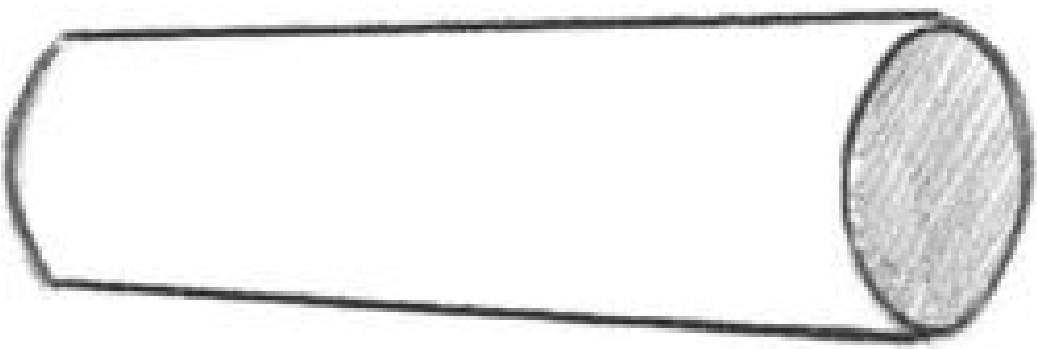
Rectangle



Cube/Box



Triangle



Cylinder

Cone

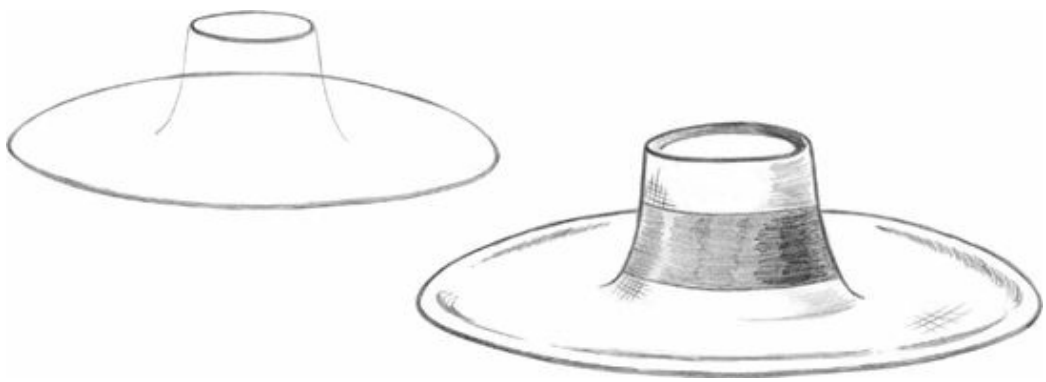
Basic Shapes in Everyday Objects

As you look at these familiar, inanimate objects, notice how the shapes constitute the foundations of each form. Using the hidden, basic shapes as your starting point is much easier than starting with the details.

Hidden shapes are not always readily apparent, hence "hidden." In fact, sometimes, you may have to invent a shape in order to give yourself a workable starting point for your drawing. In those cases, perhaps a lopsided oval will fit the subject matter better than a perfectly formed one, or a rounded square or a figure eight.

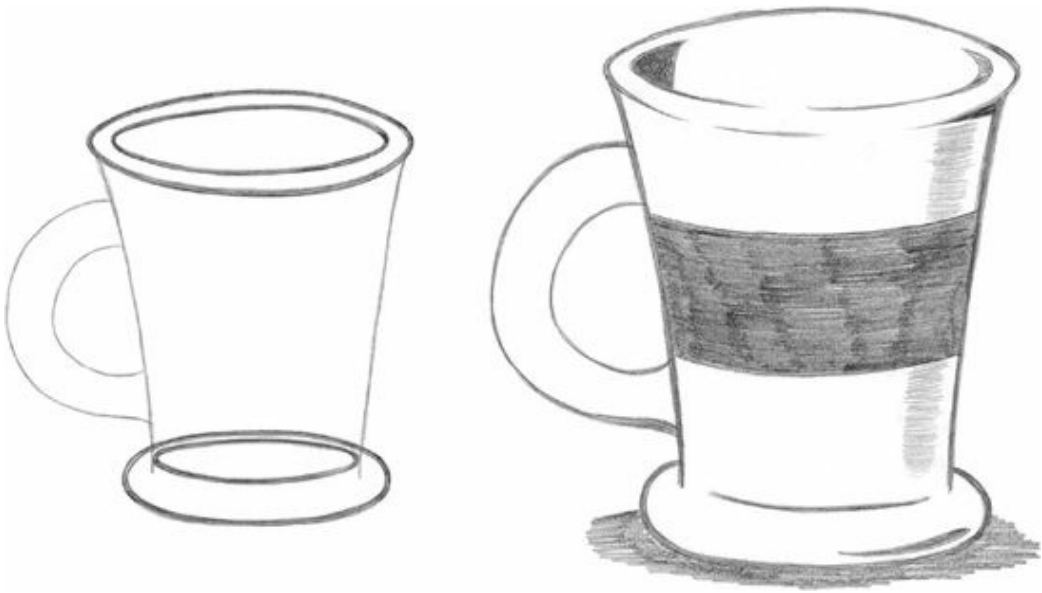
WOMAN'S HAT

This object is based on two ovals of differing sizes. Starting with ovals simplifies the artist's job and makes it easier to keep the hat symmetrical.



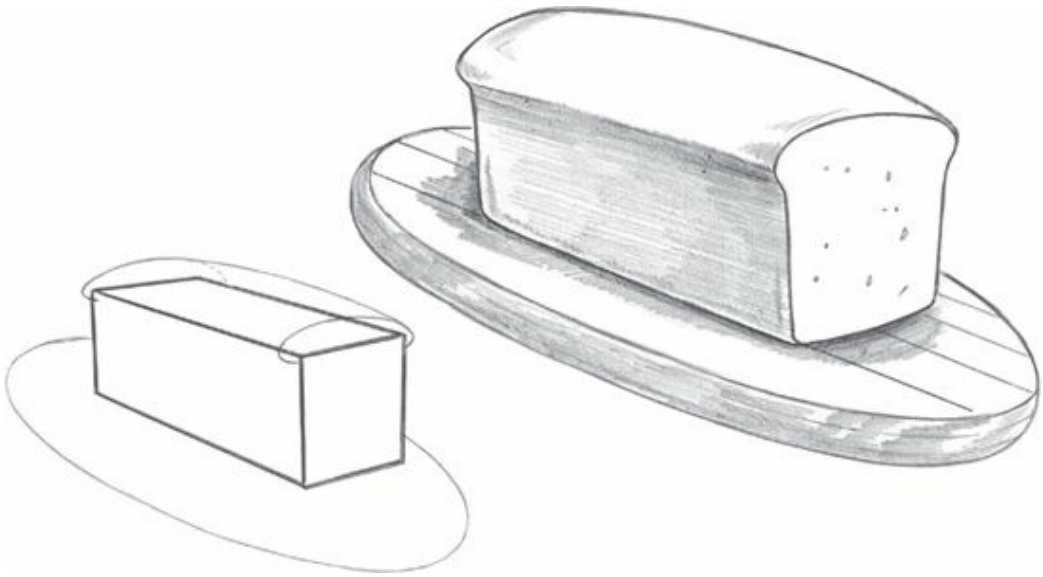
COFFEE MUG

This is a set of ovals within ovals, connected by vertical lines. If you keep the ovals evenly spaced between each other, you will end up with a coffee mug that looks accurate.



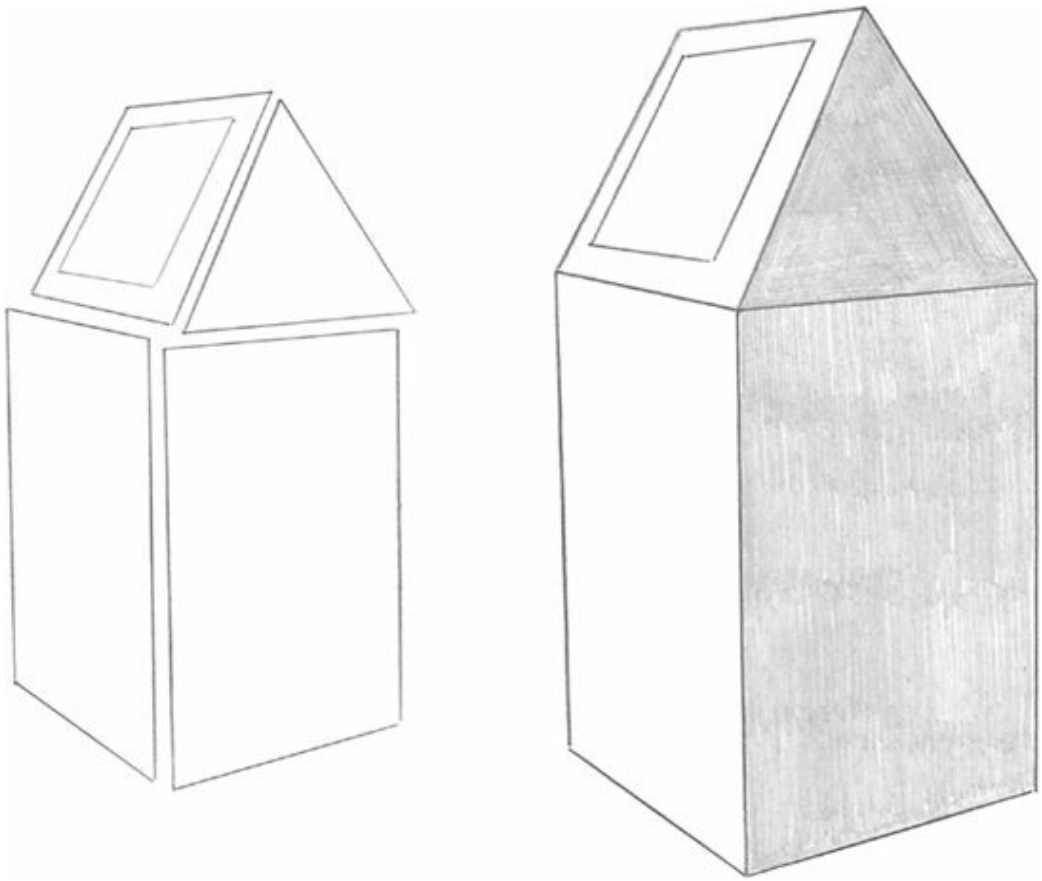
LOAF OF BREAD

The hidden shape in this loaf of bread is a rectangle.



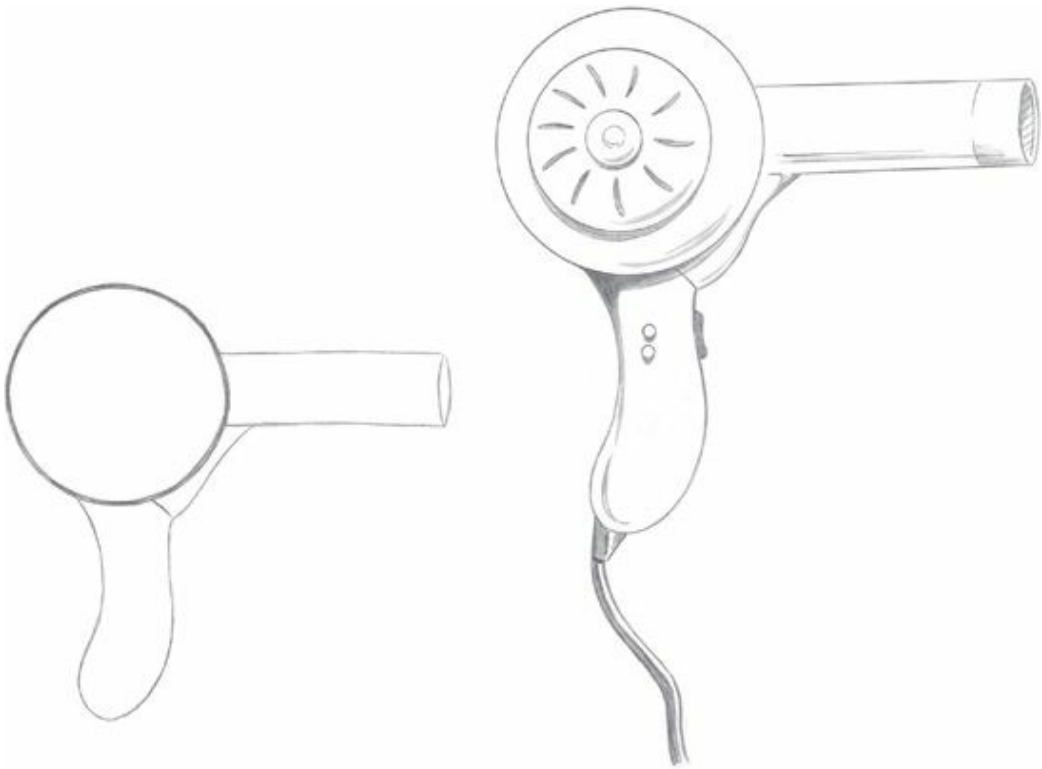
TRASH CAN

Getting the three-dimensionality of this object might seem difficult at first, but the trick is drawing the foundation rectangles at an angle. Then just add a triangle at the top, adjoined by a square within a square.



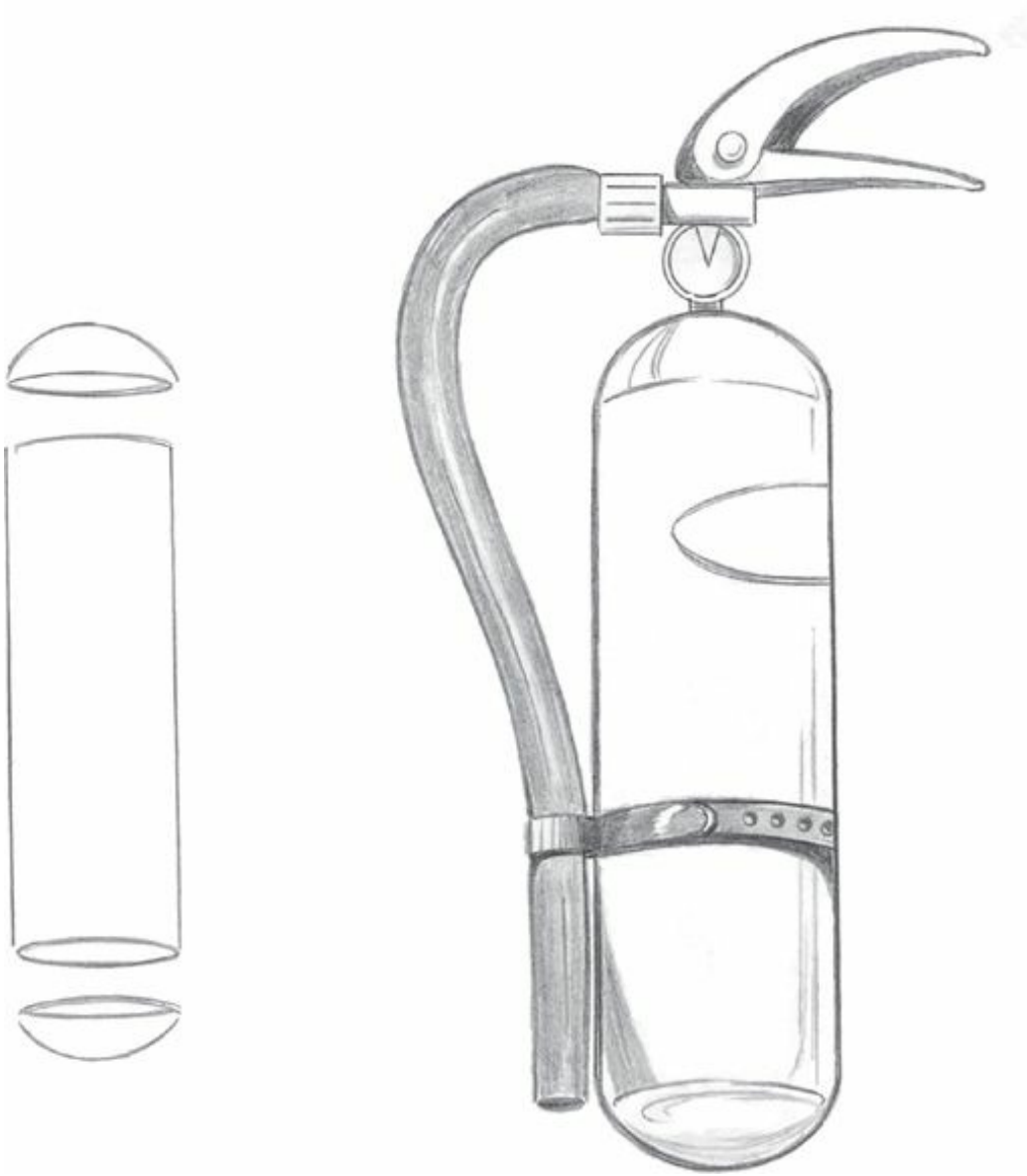
HAIR DRYER

This looks like a complicated object, but the foundation is still a basic shape. The circle is the nexus of the form, with a cylinder and elongated pear shape attached.



FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Starting with a simple cylinder, add a bowl shape to each end. Visualizing each component of a complex object as simple shapes will help you when you begin drawing.



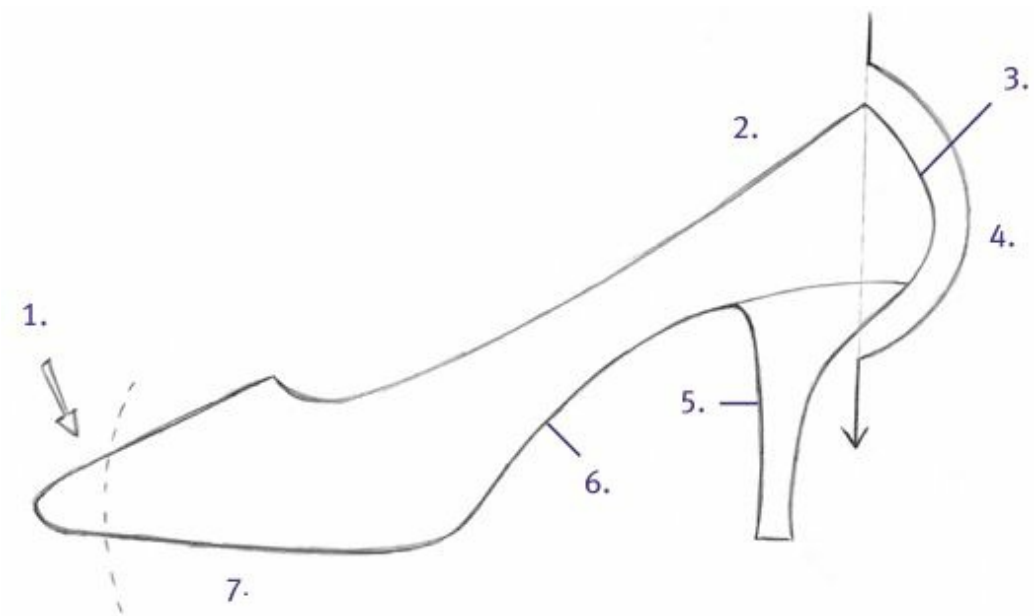
ORGANIC SHAPES

Now that we've covered a few examples of drawing from basic shapes, you're ready to move on to subjects that require custom-made shapes for their foundations. Often what works best is a shape based on an approximation of the object itself, onto which more details are added.

Organic shapes are round and curved, instead of clear-cut geometric shapes. When drawing objects based on organic shapes, allow yourself the freedom to redraw and to use your eraser. Check your critical voice at the door. This is the time to learn, not to self-judge.

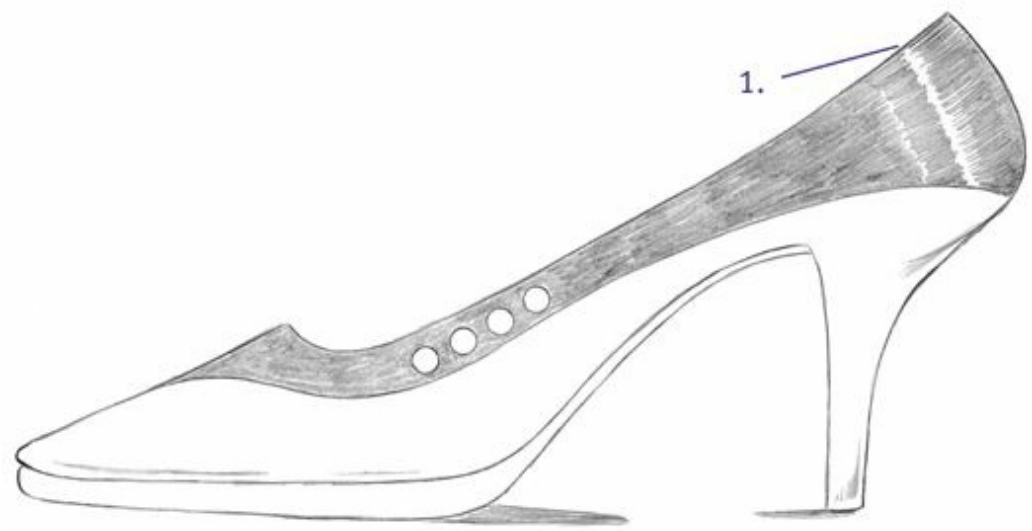
WOMAN'S SHOE

A woman's shoe typically features subtly curved lines juxtaposed against straight lines. A side view presents the easiest angle from which to begin. With the side view, your concern isn't to create the illusion of depth but instead to create a dynamic outline with flowing lines.



1. Front of shoe tapers past point where toe ends.

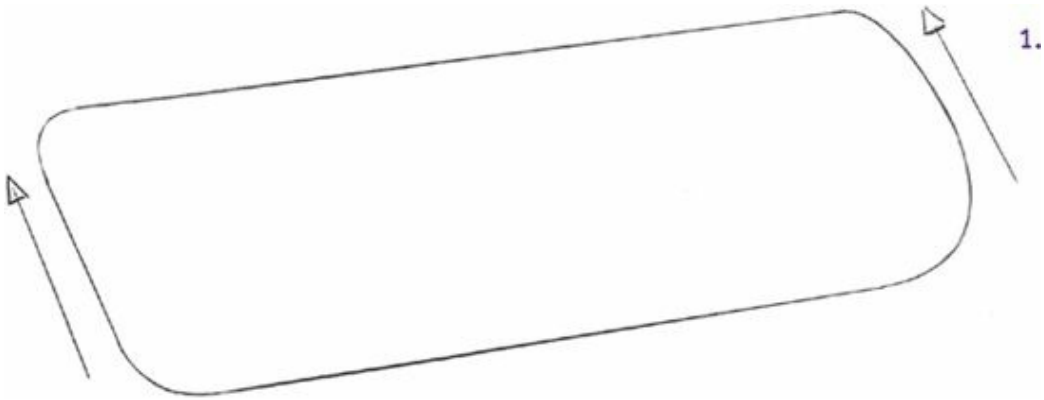
2. Straight line
3. Curved line
4. Big bump-out before heel indents
5. Straight line
6. Curved line
7. Straight line



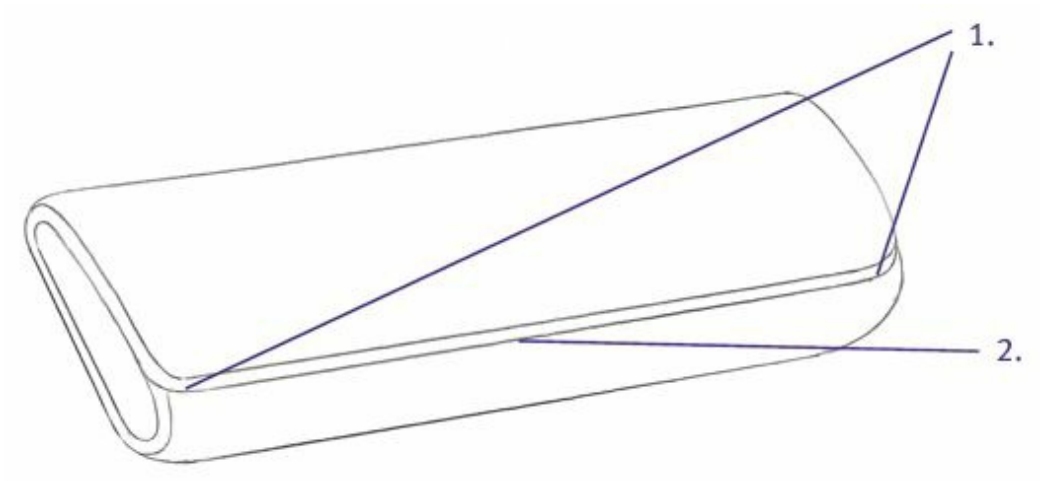
1. By leaving a line of tone off the blackened area of the heel, you give the illusion of a shine on the surface.

HAND-HELD CLUTCH

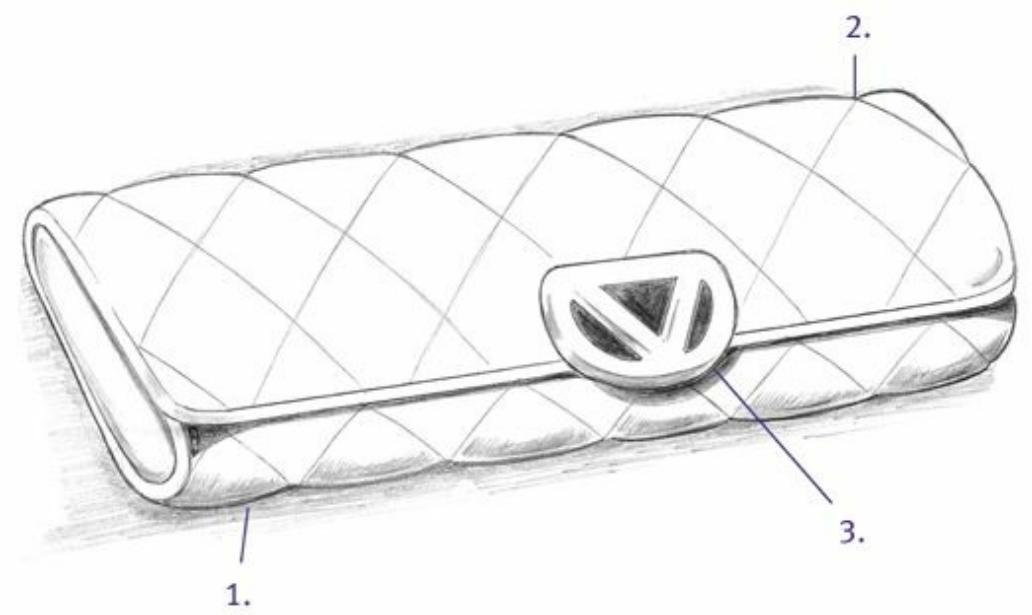
This organic shape is a rounded rectangle. The clutch is meant to be held in a woman's hand, so it must be thin and easy to carry. Save that stitched look for the last step. Texture, patterns, and accessories are usually drawn after the basic foundation is locked into place.



1. The vertical lines are drawn at a diagonal, and, even more important, they are parallel to each other.



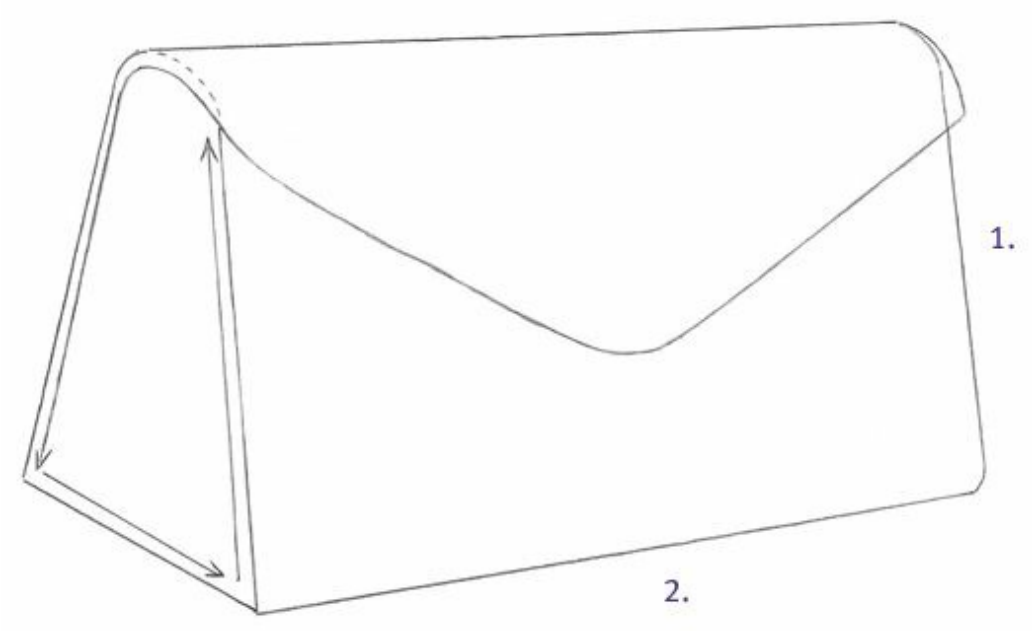
1. Pay careful attention to getting the "fold-over" line correct. Round off the end; don't leave a square corner.
2. Draw the fold-over line as a narrow double line, which will convey the thickness of the sides.



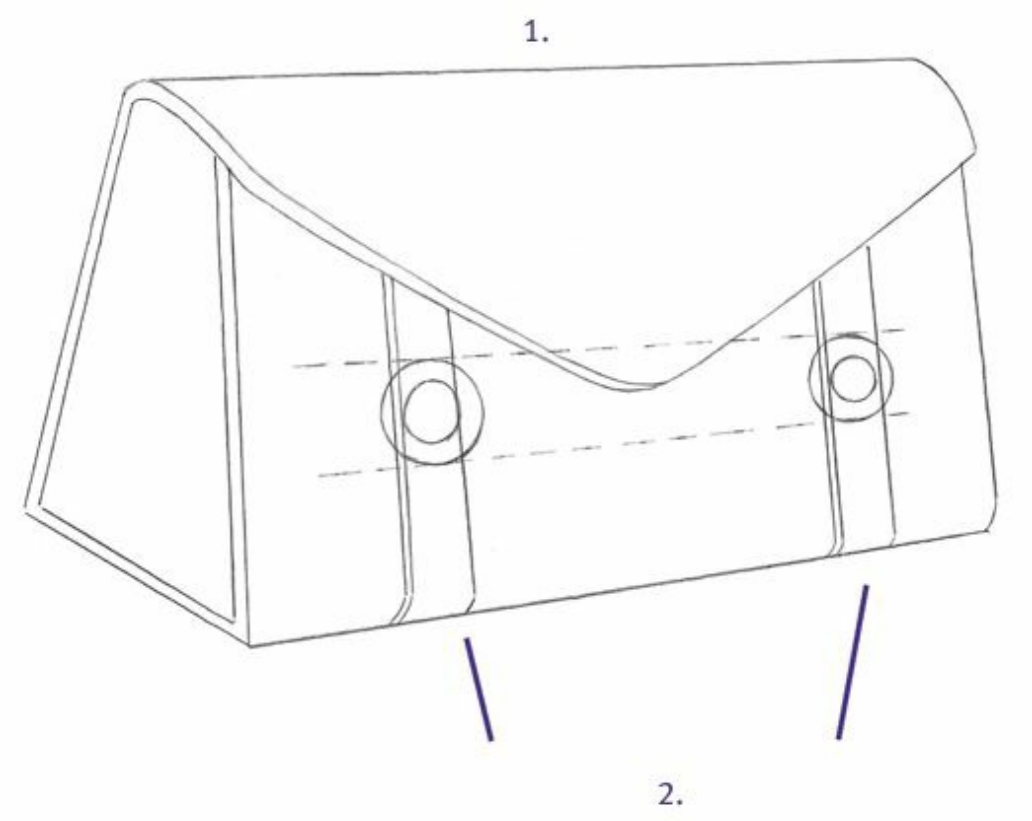
1. By shading the place where the purse touches the table, you give the purse the appearance of a solid form.
2. Indent where the stitched pattern intersects with the outline of the purse.
3. Once you have the basic shape of the clutch, you can add details like a decorative clasp and a diagonal stitch pattern.

FASHIONABLE PURSE

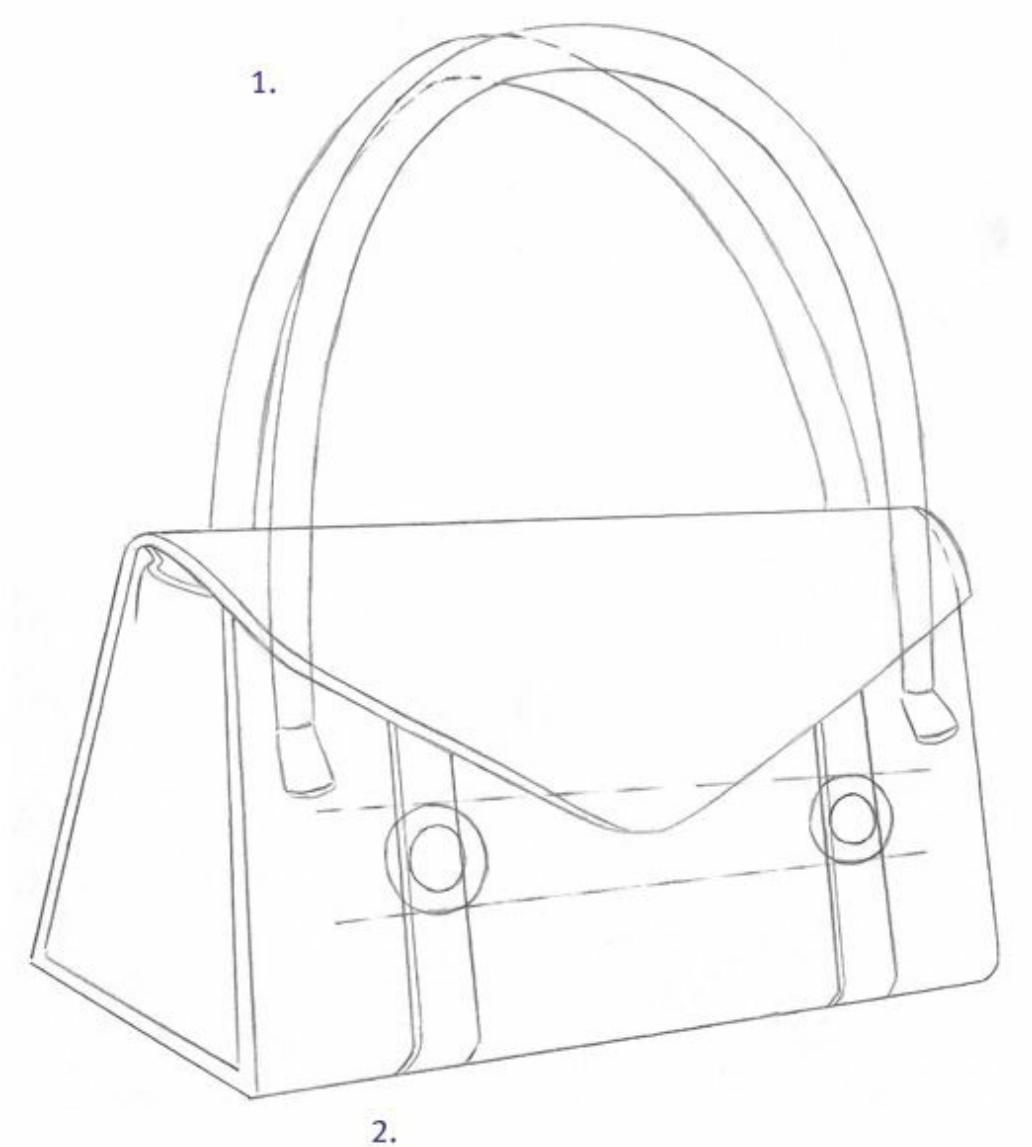
Some shapes are iconic. An iconic shape is one that the viewer instantly recognizes as a particular object. Your goal is to establish the concept shape as early as possible, before adding in the details. This unique shape is quickly identified as a woman's purse, even without any details filled in.



1. The cover flap extends slightly beyond the main body of the purse. Keep the flap rounded, not pointed.
2. The base of the purse is drawn at a diagonal.



1. Add thickness to the body of the purse by drawing double lines along the edges. Remember to reflect this thickness in the cover, as well.
2. Draw two straps down the front of the purse. Be sure the straps are drawn parallel to the sides of the purse (the vertical lines on either end).

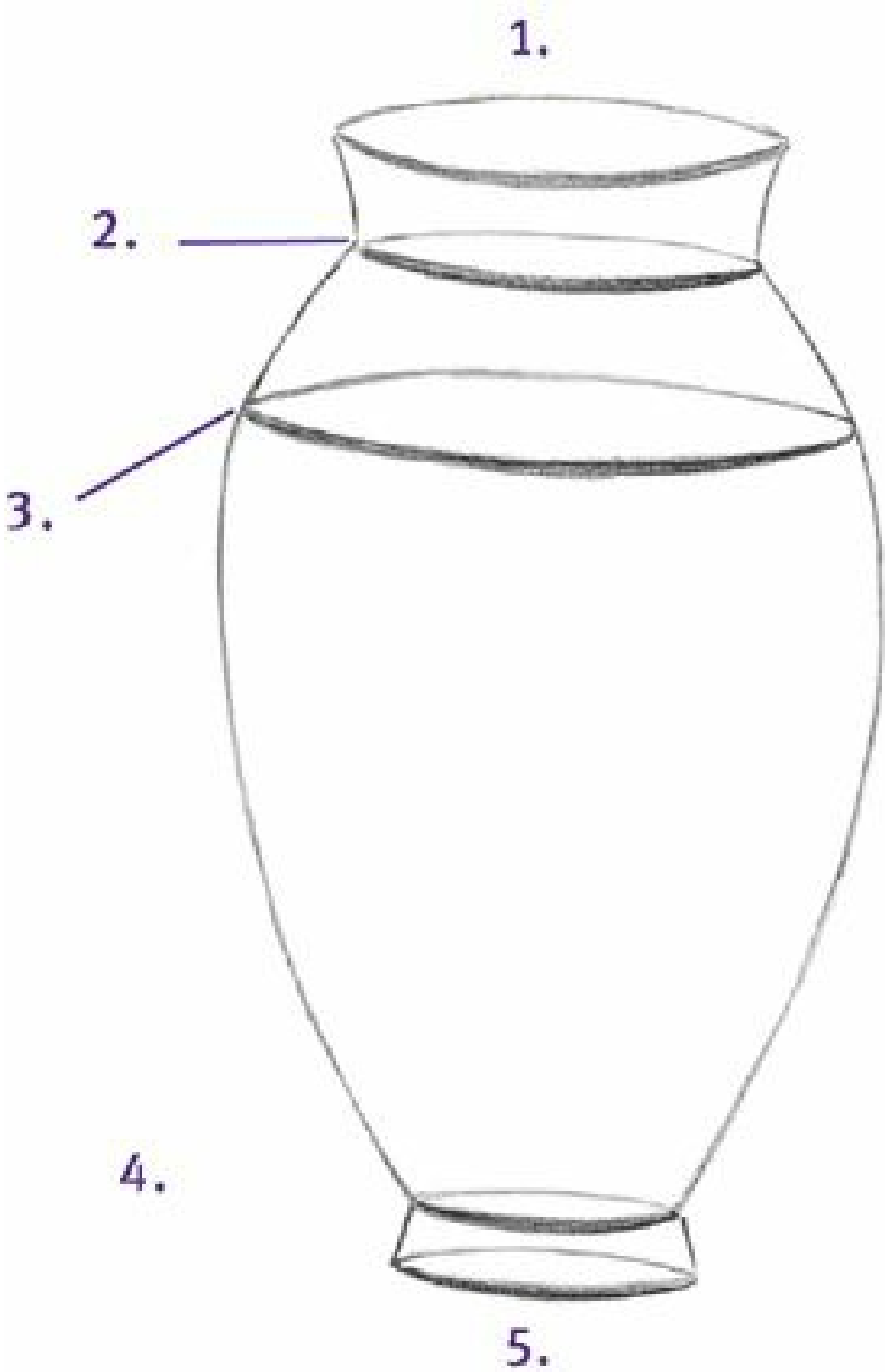


1. Draw the far handle so that it appears to run "through" the near one, rather than starting and stopping. It helps with placement and is how professional artists sketch.
2. To add decorative buckles, you first need to add guidelines to make sure that they line up evenly. Draw two even sketch lines, parallel to the bottom horizontal line of the purse.

You've got your basic purse. Now comes the fun part. Add stripes, leopard spots, or whatever stylish accents you wish.

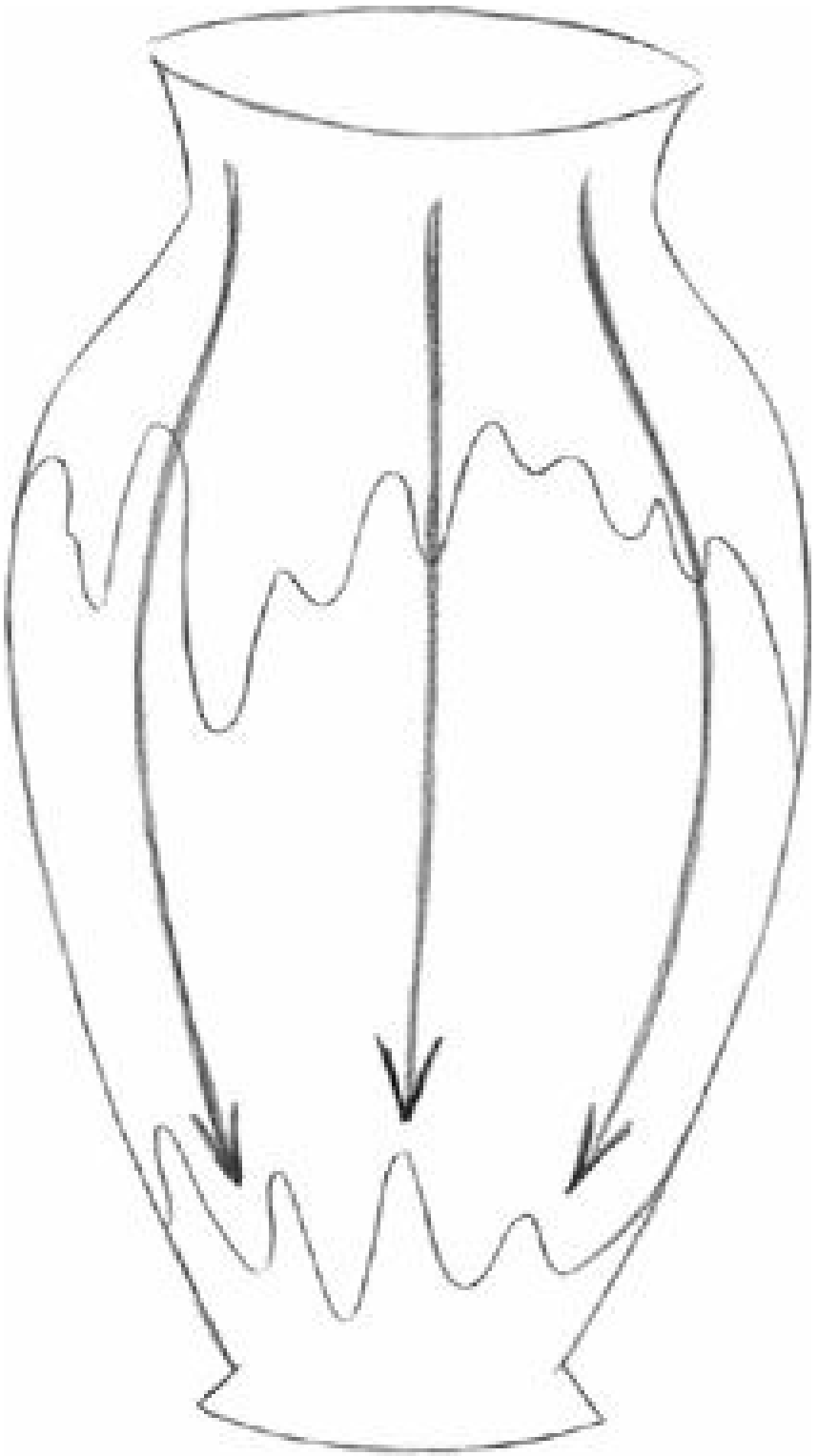
SYMMETRY

There's an easy way to guarantee symmetry when drawing simple, decorative containers, like vases and pitchers. Draw horizontal ovals, parallel to the bottom of the page. These ovals should be wide enough to make contact with the outline of the vase on both sides. Using this simple technique keeps both sides even and also helps you envision the depth and roundness of the object you're drawing. To practice this concept, you'll start by drawing a simple vase.


1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

1. Opening
2. First oval at narrow point of body
3. Second oval at widest point of body
4. Third oval at base of vase
5. Stand

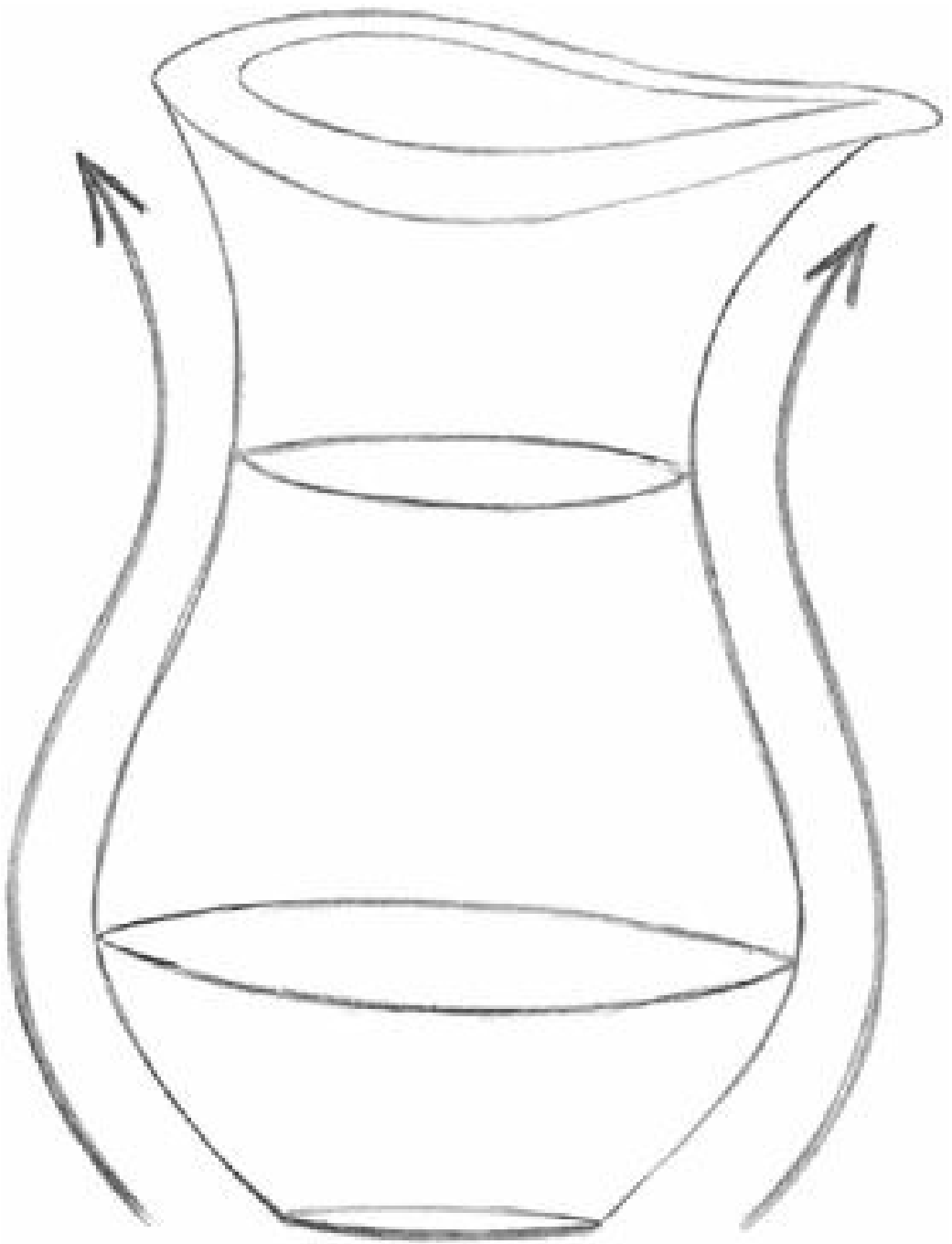
The ovals must be perfectly horizontal to keep the bulges on both sides of the object at an even level.



The drops of paint do not travel down in a straight line but follow the contour of the vase. Since the form is curved, the paint will travel in a rounded trajectory, as indicated by the arrows. This effect will have the added benefit of reinforcing the illusion of your drawing having three dimensions.

REVERSE CURVES

When curves travel in one direction, then curve again in the opposite direction, the result is sweeping, elegant lines. This technique is called *reverse curves*, and it is used to create many graceful subjects, from still life subjects to human figures.



The outline of the pitcher shown here is based on two curving lines. Here, the reverse curves mirror each other, creating a symmetrical look.

Gradually soften where the handle attaches to the body of the pitcher, rather than sticking it on abruptly. Note how the handle thickens as it descends.

3. The two semicircular guards maintain consistent perspective, as they are placed along a vanishing line that runs parallel to the diagonal line at the end of the boat (to its left).

The bow (front) of the ship is almost always slightly higher than the stern (rear).

Sailboats on a Lake

Not all projects need to be challenging for you to enjoy spending a little extra creative time working at them. Here's an example of a relatively easy scene that is breezy and atmospheric. If you're a painter or a watercolorist, or if you like colored pencils or pastels, you can use this as a basis for a color work.

We want our viewer to react positively to the scene we are about to create. But developing a scene takes more than simply drawing pretty pictures. We artists are like tour guides, and therefore we have to make sure that the viewer doesn't miss anything important in the scene we've created.

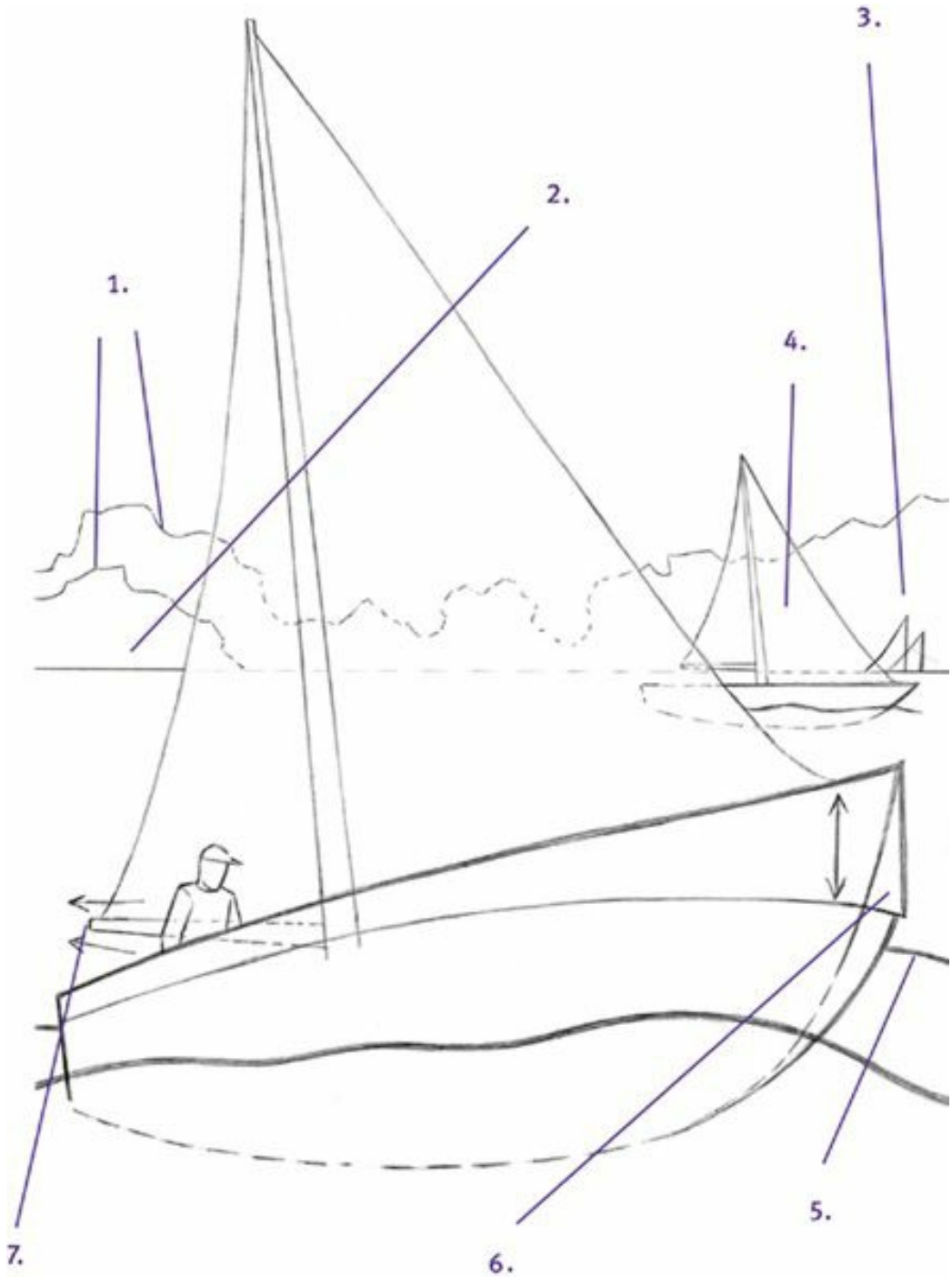
Here are a few general principles to keep in mind when composing a scene and how, specifically, we've used them here:

Exaggeration. The sailboat in the foreground is increased in size and appears to be coming at the viewer, thus involving the viewer in the scene.

Placement. The boats are arranged rhythmically, which is more pleasing than placing them randomly.

Depth. By drawing the boats at different sizes and placing them at different distances from one another and the horizon, we give the scene depth.

Horizon line. We've underscored the feeling of serenity by emphasizing horizontal lines, as opposed to diagonal lines. The horizon line, the line of the clouds, and the direction of the sailboats are all horizontal.



1. Using two sets of clouds adds depth to the sky.
2. The horizon line doubles as the edge of the water.

3. At a distance, the body of the boats cannot be seen over the horizon; only the sails are visible.
4. The near boat overlaps the far boats, connecting separate elements in the picture and creating a sense of depth.
5. Show a line of water behind the boat, so that the boat appears to be sandwiched between a current in front and a current in back.
6. By showing a sliver of the far side of the hull, the part to the right of the center line, the boat appears to be three-dimensional.
7. The boom is traveling back into the distance, which means perspective causes it to taper.

Note the varied, gray pencil tones used for shading, as the subject matter requires a deft touch. A light shade of gray can be used to suggest blue for the sky. Leaving the clouds white provides the contrast

that makes it read correctly. The horizon line is low on the picture, giving it that "Big Sky" look.

HOUSES

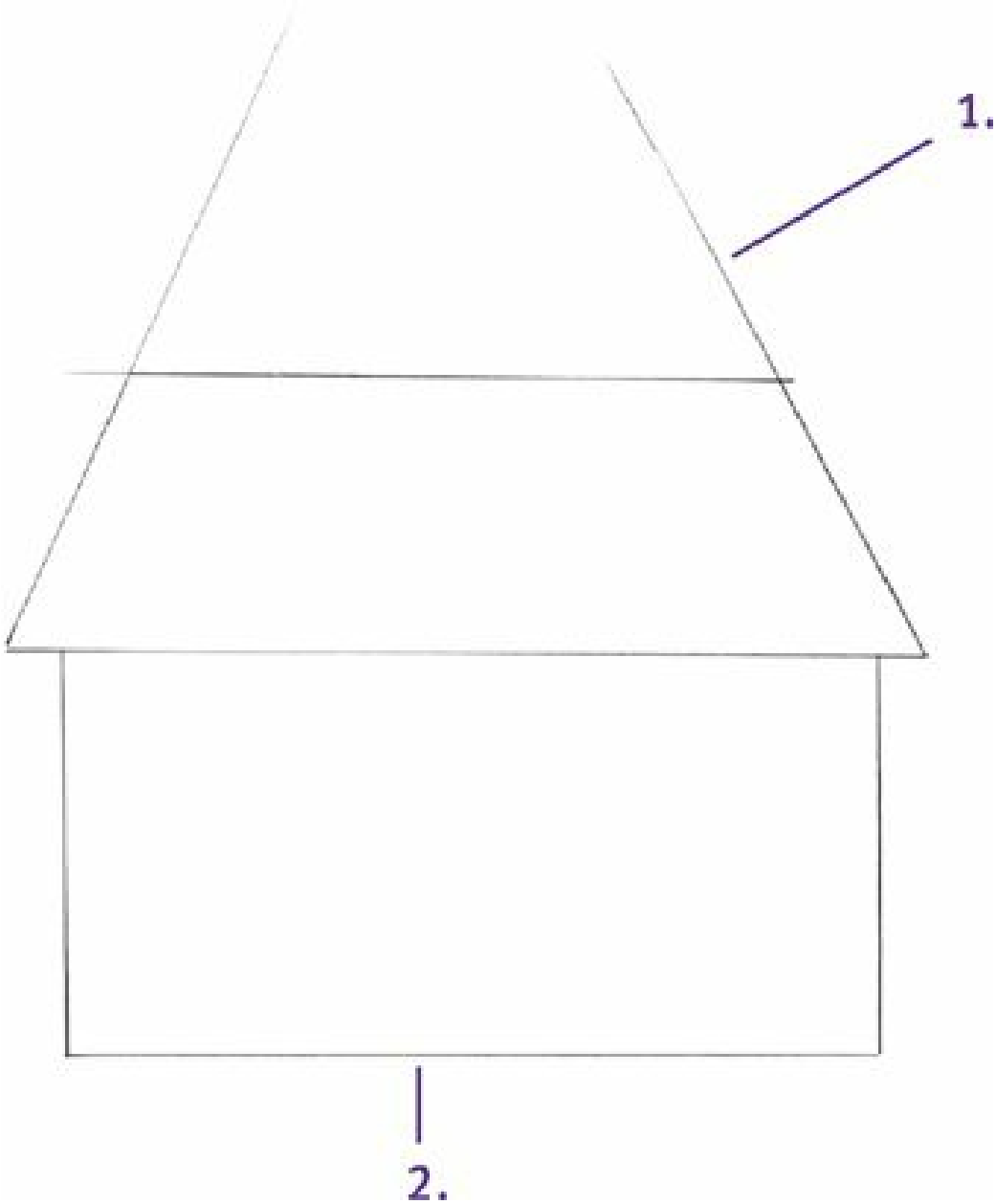
You don't have to be an architect to draw attractive houses. With a little bit of concentration and attention to detail, they are surprisingly easy to master. It's simply a matter of starting with a basic foundation shape and adding to it, step by step, until you're done.

Houses are made up of many straight lines, hard angles, and very little freehand work. Because of that, you're going to make extensive use of a ruler or a triangle. Drawing a house will require many little decisions, such as, "If I move this line a tad this way, will the window look even or tilted?" Decisions like these are a natural and necessary part of the drawing process.

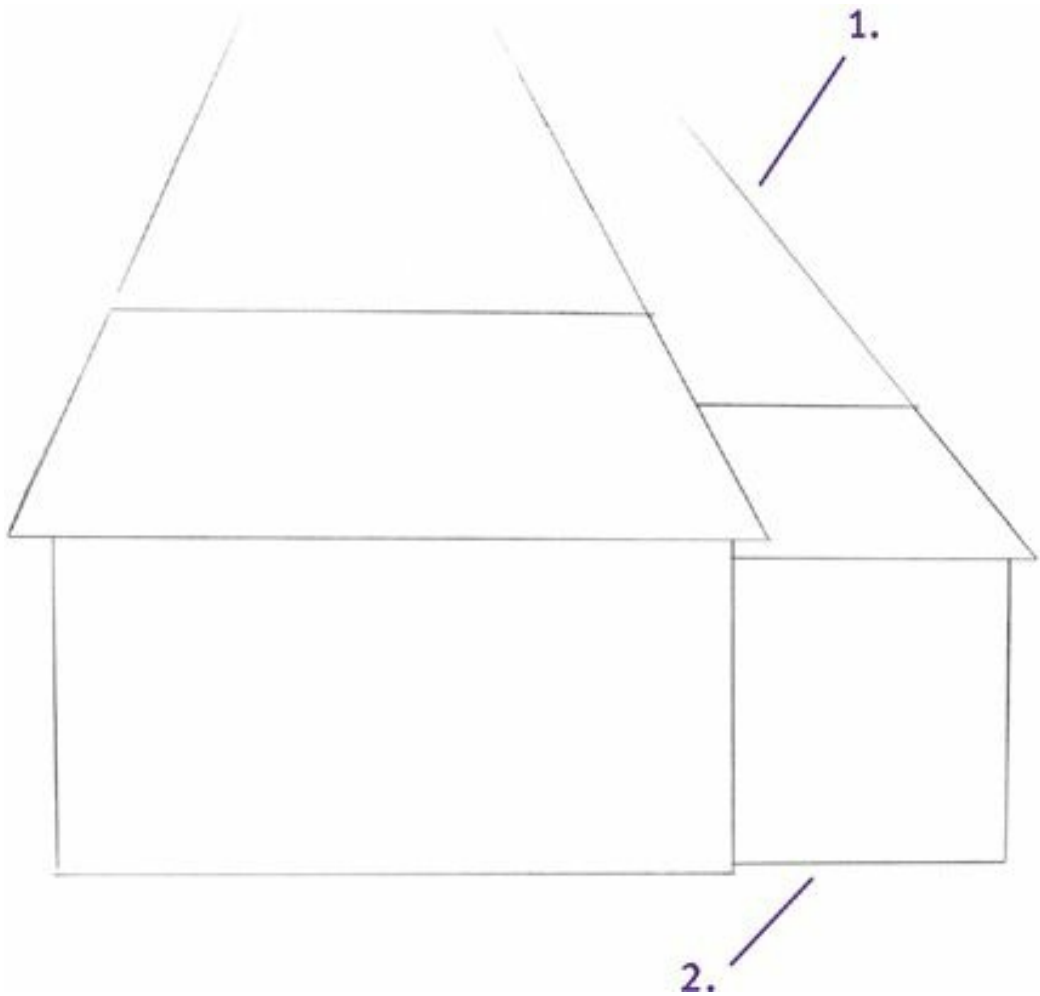
During the drawing process, keep an eye out for the symmetry of your work. Make sure that all the vertical and horizontal lines are parallel, that each element is carefully centered, and that the windows are spaced evenly apart at regular intervals. A house gets its pleasing look from its symmetrical repetition.

Traditional-Style Colonial

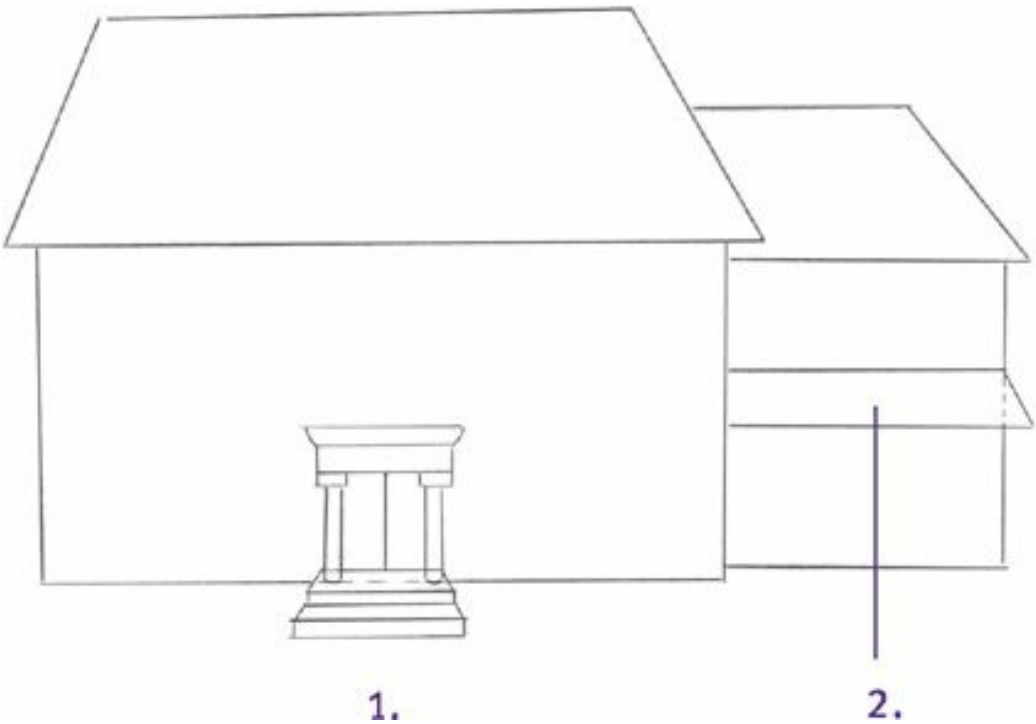
The colonial-style house is traditional and vastly popular. Everything about this stately house is straightforward and highly symmetrical. There are few, if any, curves to a colonial house. This makes our job as an artist even easier: We can draw just about everything as parallel lines or right angles, with the prominent exception of the long, diagonal lines on either side of the roof. These houses are built with clapboard: long, thin wooden planks that create light horizontal striations across the face of the house—another signature design element.



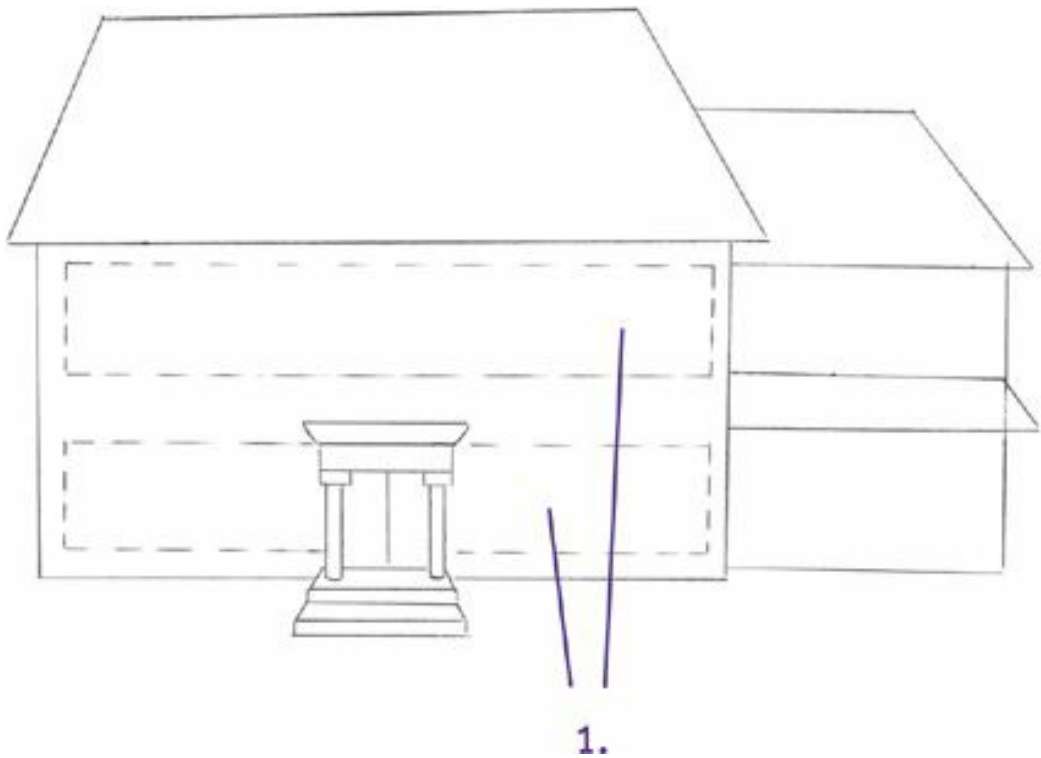
1. The lines of the roof ascend at an even rate toward each other along vanishing lines.
2. The body of the house is based on a simple rectangle.



1. A second diagonal roof line follows the angle of the first.
2. Draw a slightly smaller rectangle for the adjoining section of the house.



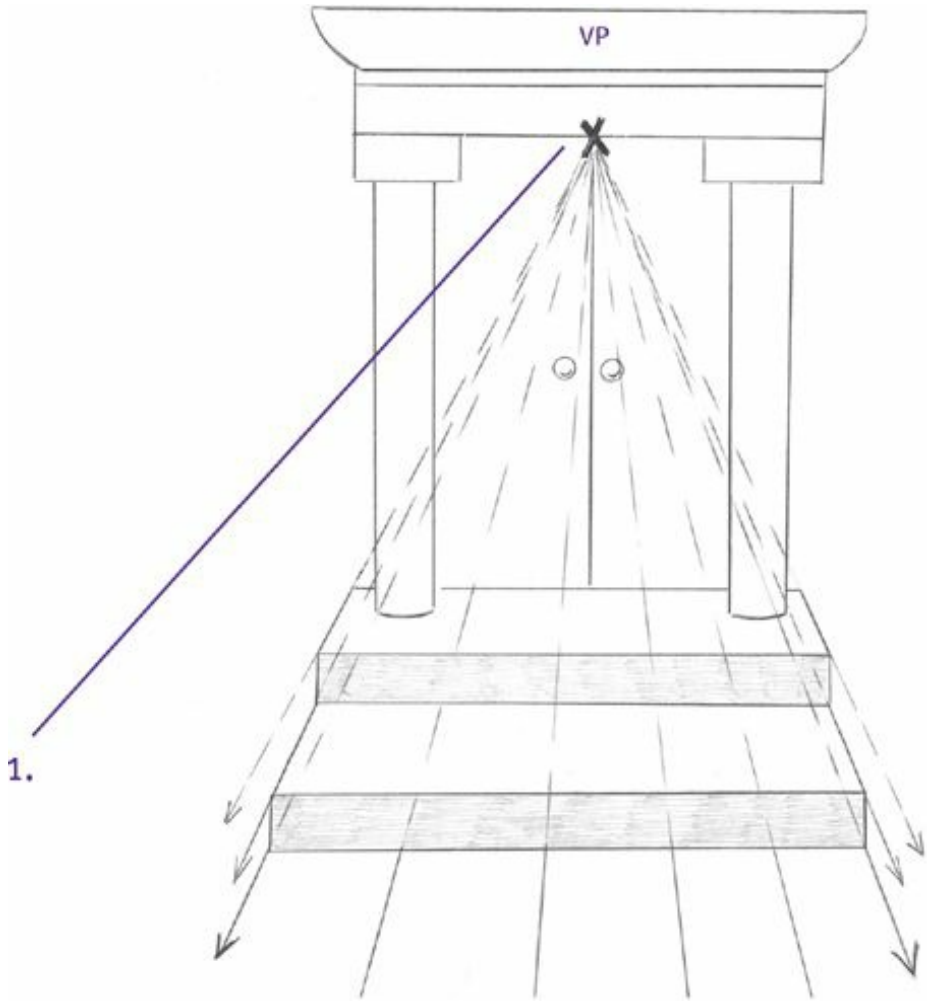
1. Draw and center a simple portico.
2. Draw a third, small and narrow roof over the garage.



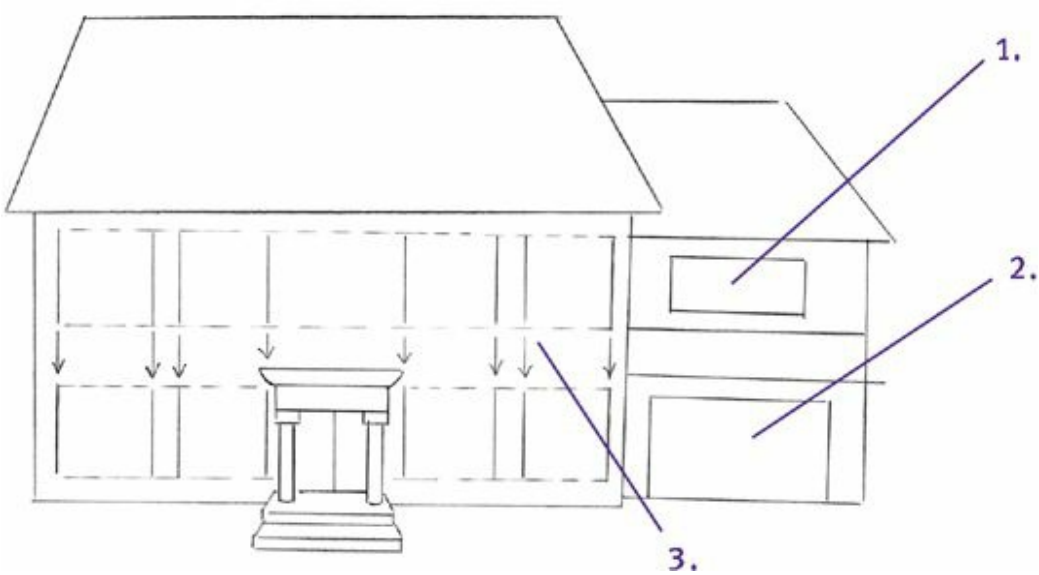
1. Sketch two long rectangles inside the frame of the house. These are guidelines, within which the windows will be drawn.

QUICK TIP

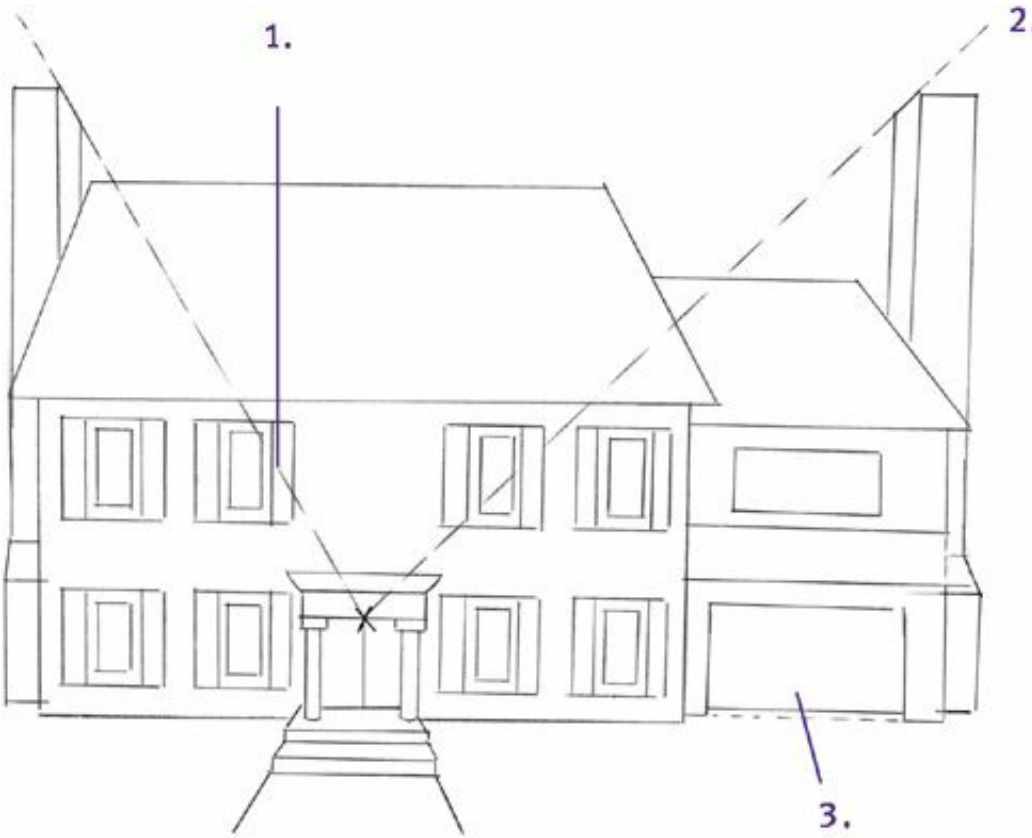
Perspective on the Walkway



1. Note how all the levels of the walkway recede toward the vanishing point.



1. A rectangle becomes the window for the adjoined section of the house.
2. A larger rectangle becomes the garage door.
3. Notice that the top and bottom sets of windows are stacked evenly on top of each other.



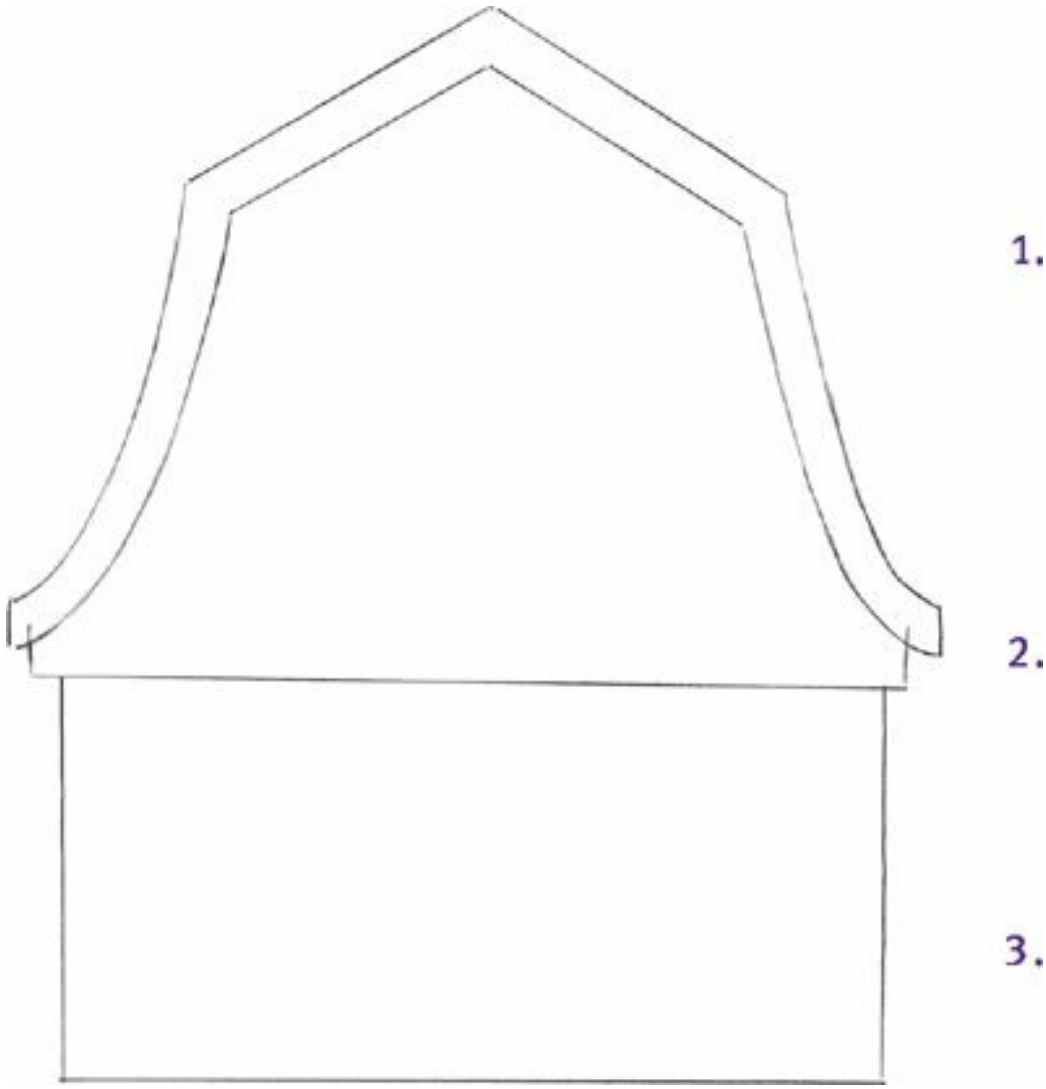
1. Each window is bookended by a pair of shutters.
2. The chimney lines travel back along vanishing lines toward the vanishing point on the portico.
3. Indent just slightly the bottom of the garage door.

We've added the signature wooden clapboard siding to the house, as well as a few details to complete the scene. Notice that the stone walkway, too, is drawn in perspective, which leads the viewer's eye directly to the front door.

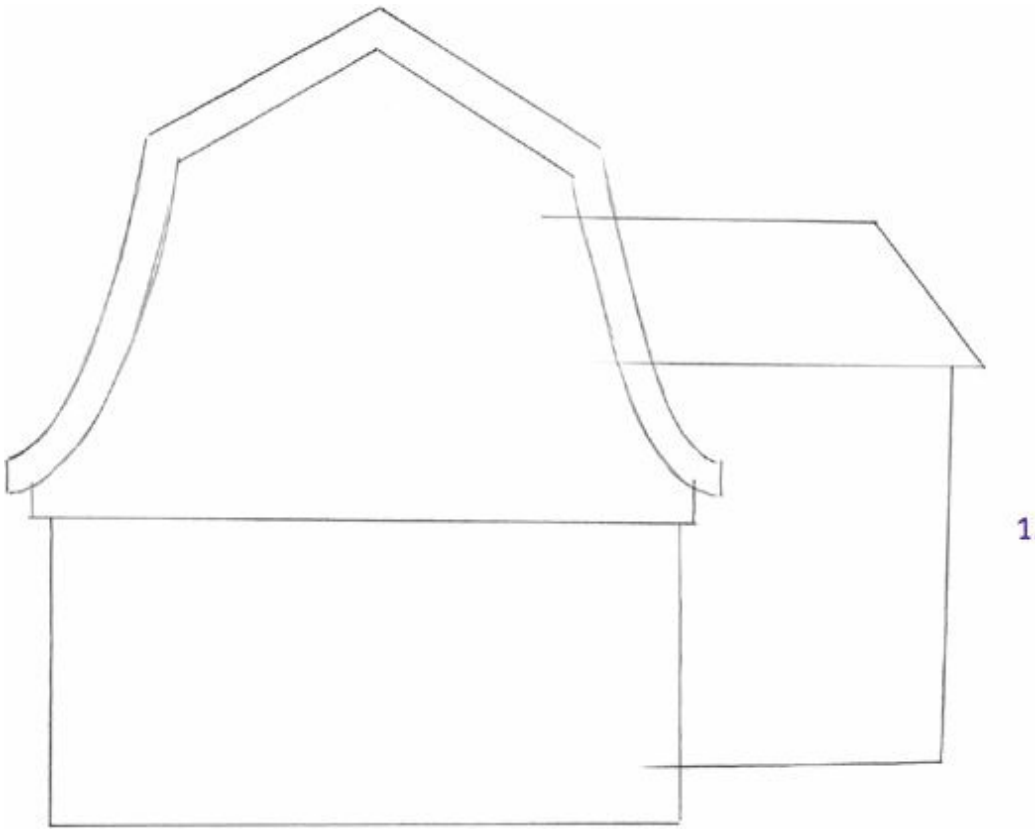
Dutch-Style Colonial

Unlike its grander cousin, the traditional colonial, the Dutch colonial is

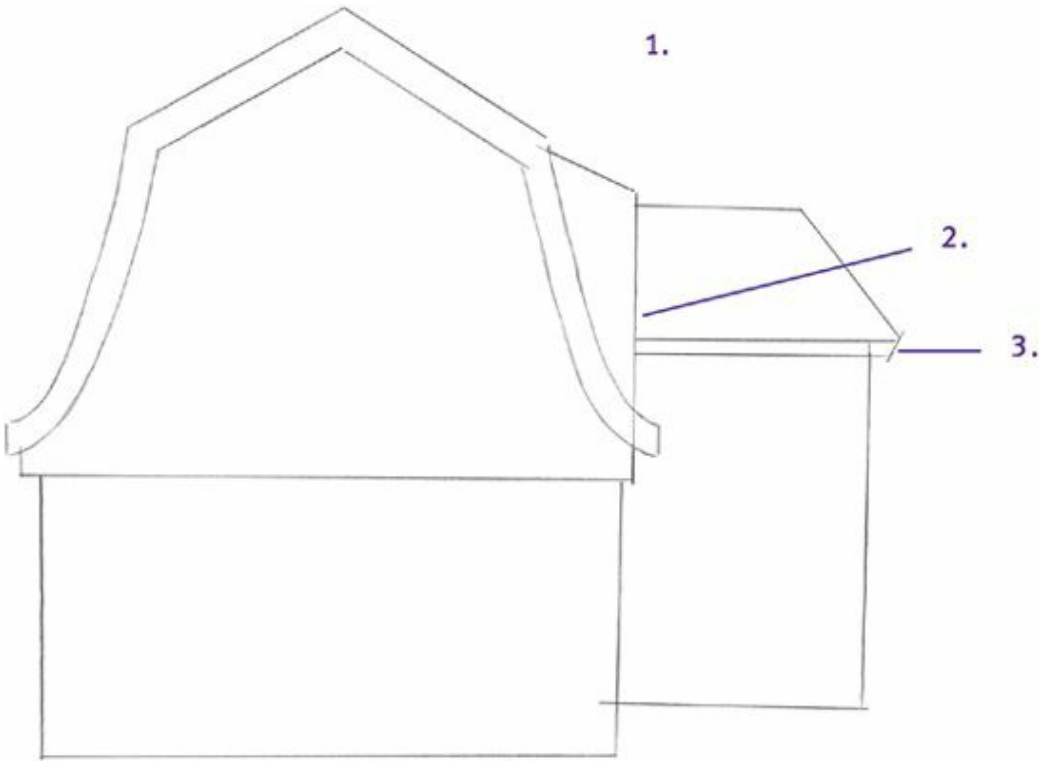
made with wider wooden slats. The house is usually divided into a main section and an adjoining section. The main section has a signature roof with a sort of “Dutch boy” haircut shape to it. I find these houses particularly charming.



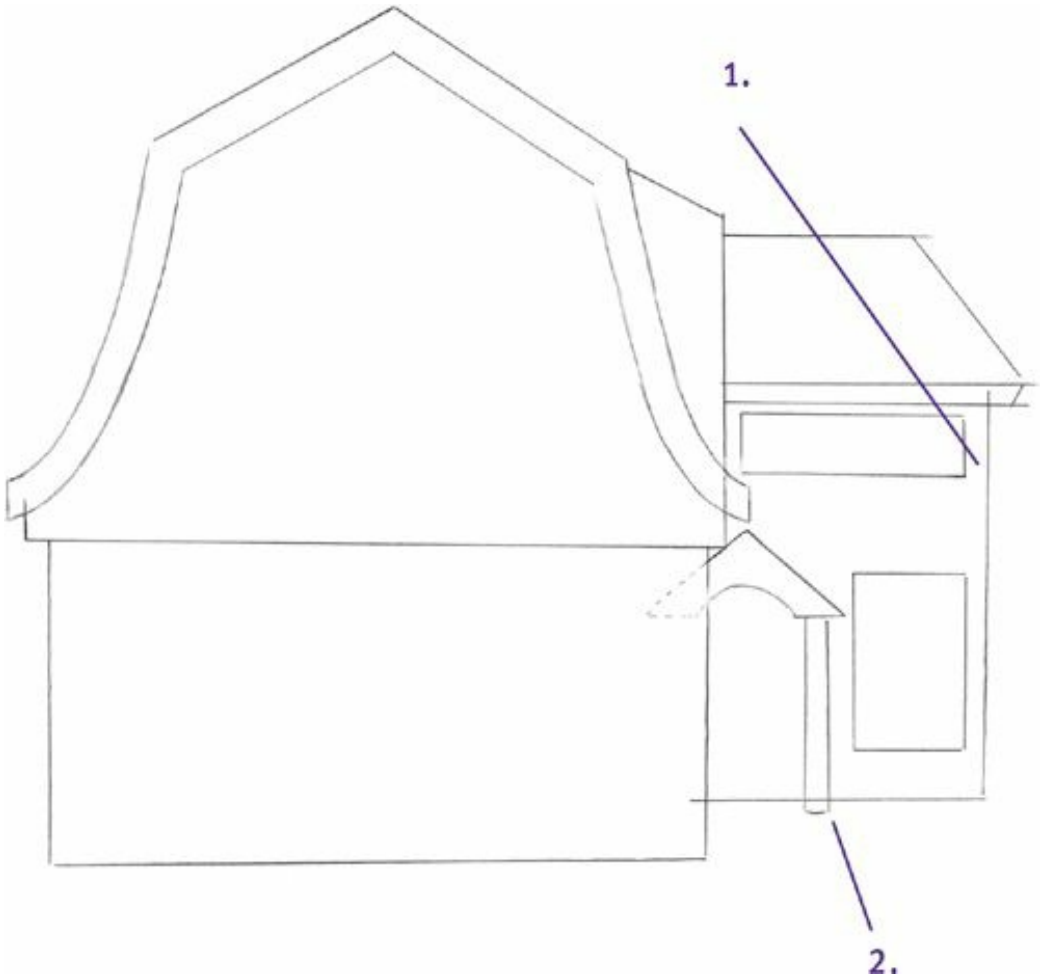
1. Draw the sides of the roof freehand, to capture its gently sloping appearance.
2. Roof extends just past the underlying structure.
3. Simple rectangle is used for the ground floor of the house.



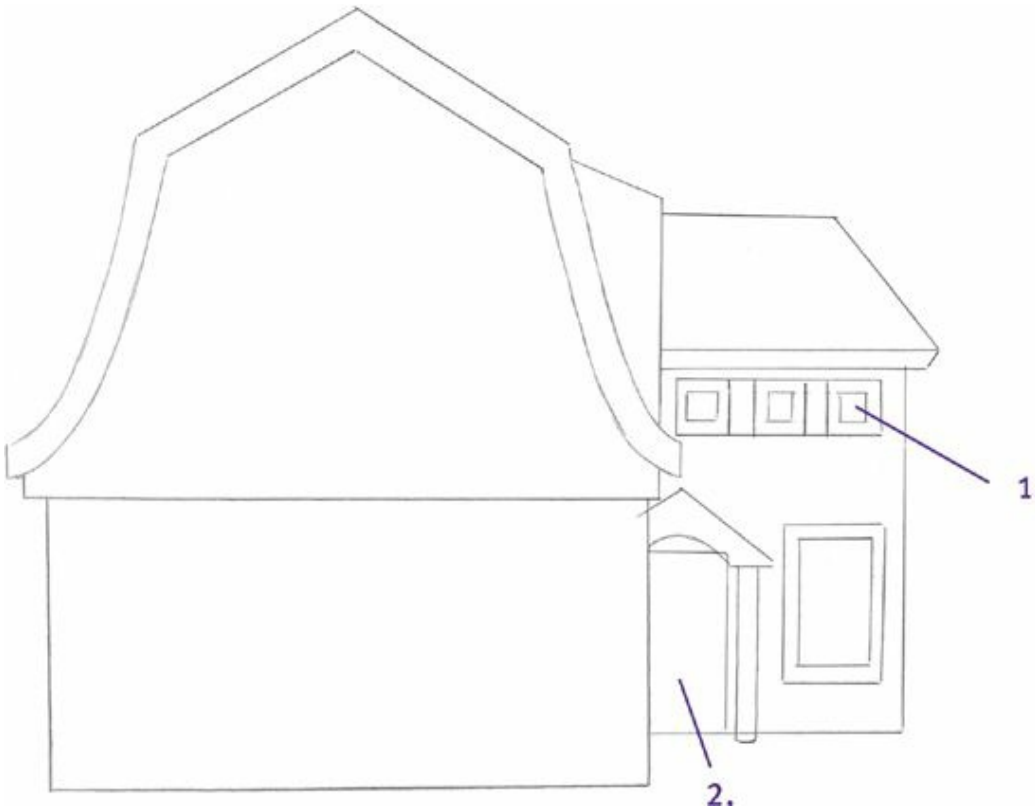
1. The ground floor of the adjoining structure begins on a higher level than the first, which gives the illusion that it is farther back in the picture plane.



1. The second floor extends here. We can't see the windows, because this is a side view.
2. Note that since we are looking up at the roof, we can see the thickness of its edge.
3. The edge cuts off at an angle.

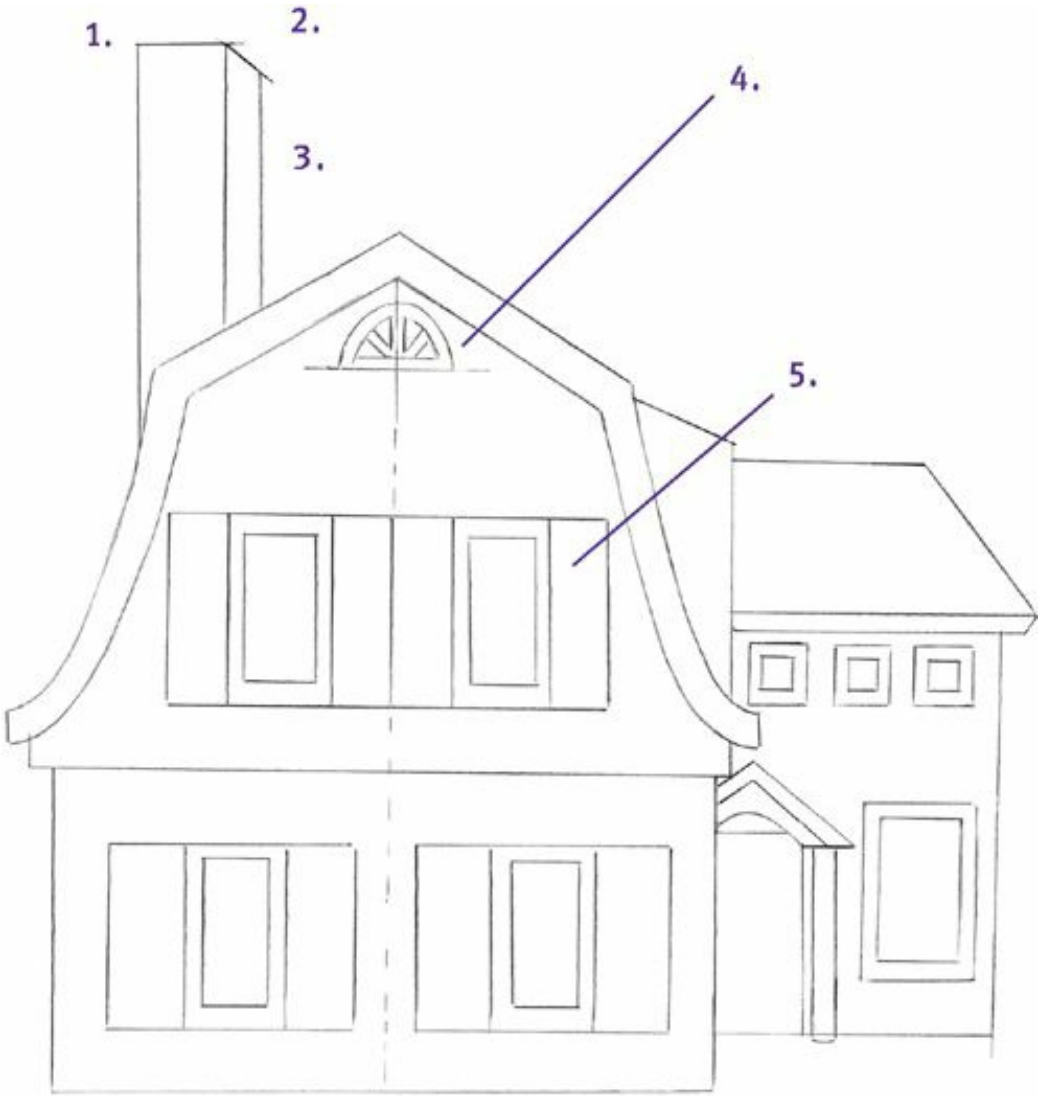


1. Leave a comfortable margin of space between the windows and the side of the house.
2. The column for the entranceway must be placed a few notches below the ground line of the house, not flush with it.

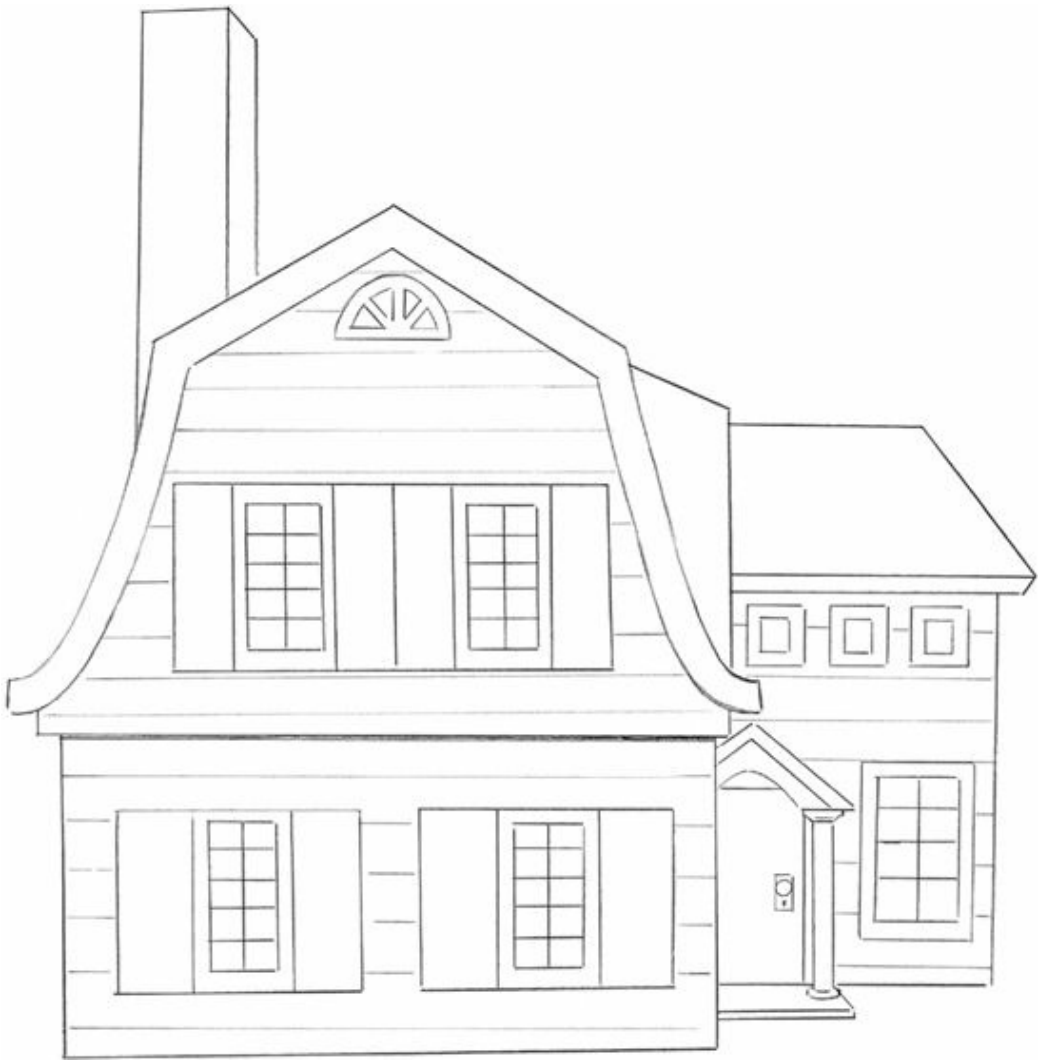


1. Frame out three evenly spaced squares. Dutch colonials have charming, small windows on the second floor of the adjoining section of the house.
2. Center the door under the portico.

Draw and center a large rectangle on the ground floor, then divide this into two smaller rectangles. Use these for the guidelines for the windows. Do the same for the second floor.



1. Horizontal line of chimney top
2. Diagonal line of chimney top
3. Interior side of chimney
4. Draw a decorative attic window, centered.
5. Each window is a “double rectangle.”



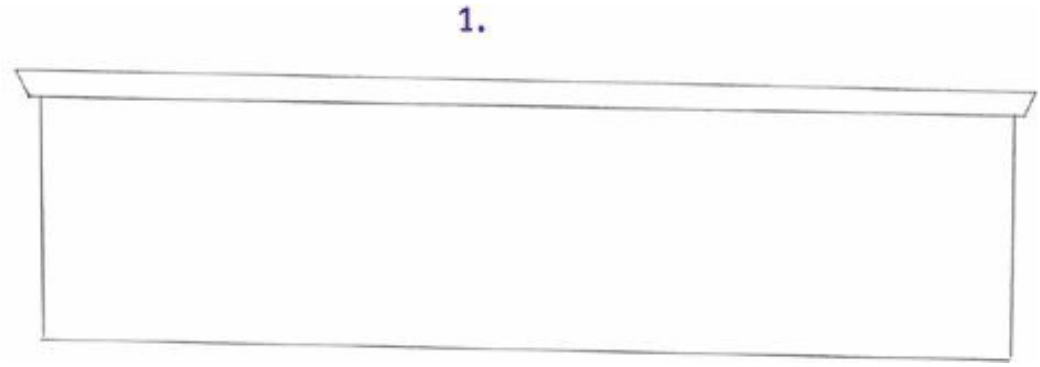
The Dutch colonial has a naturally appealing design, with pleasing simplicity and symmetry. Many upscale versions are located near beaches as summer homes.

Spanish-Style Villa

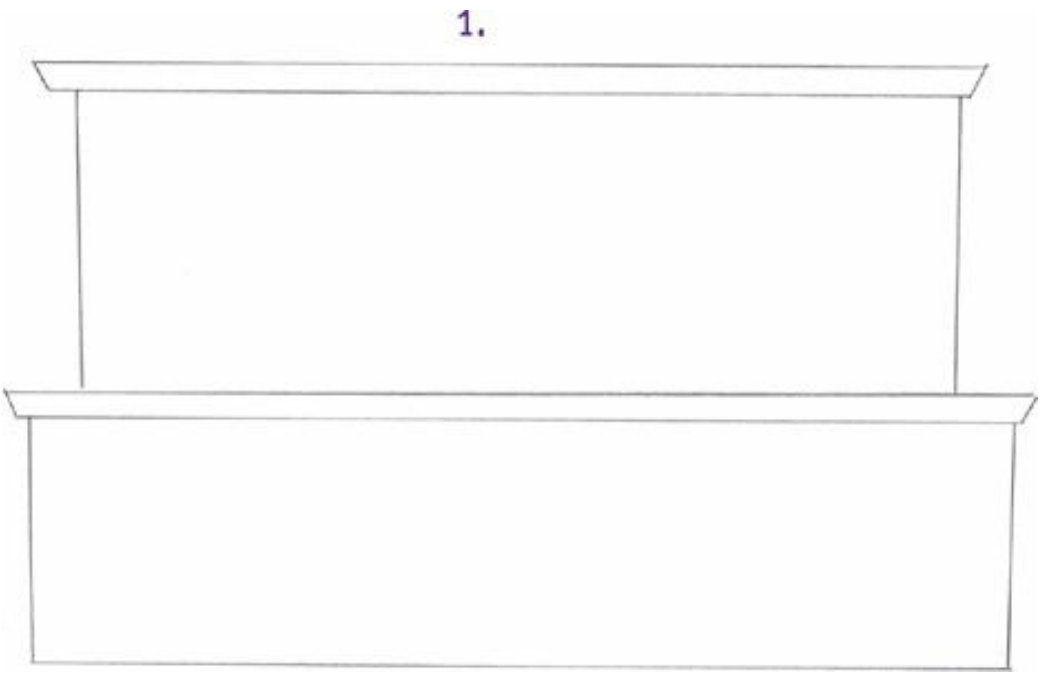
I find Spanish houses enjoyable to draw because no two of them are designed exactly alike. That means you get to create your own

variations simply by repositioning an archway, changing the shape or size of the windows, or moving the entranceway.

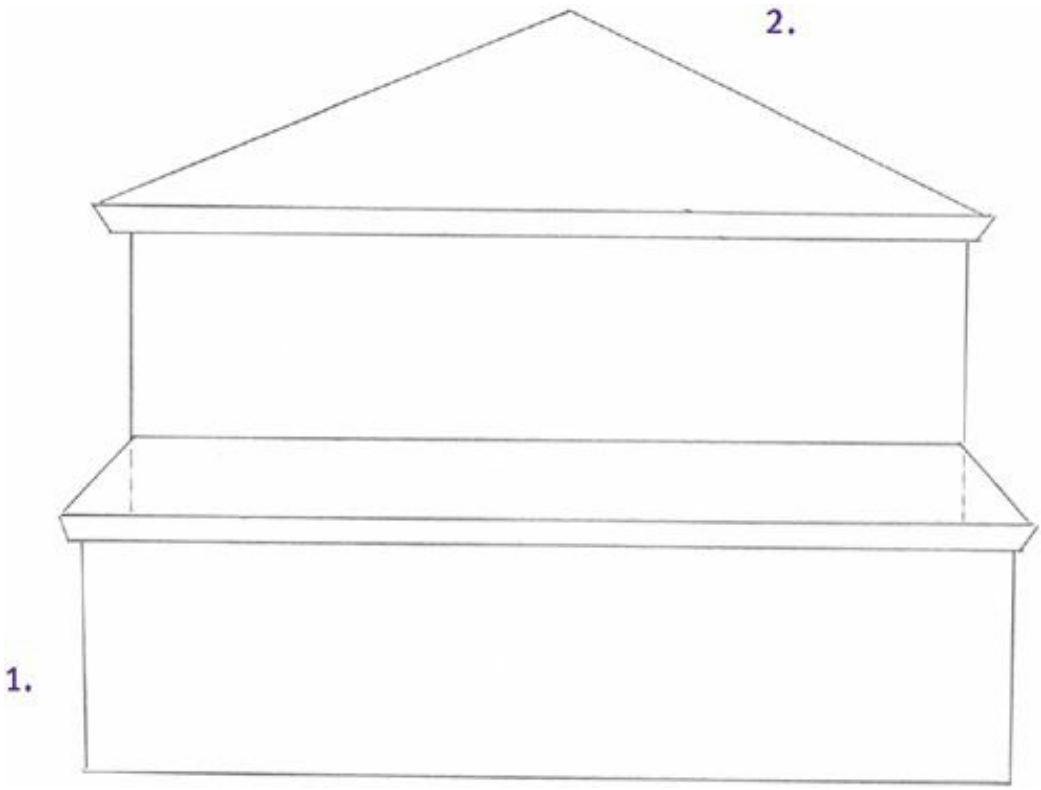
Spanish houses typically have layered walls, which create different ground-level areas for you to draw. All the shifting levels could look confusing. In order to create a cohesive look, try to place windows, doors, and entryways along shared horizontal lines.



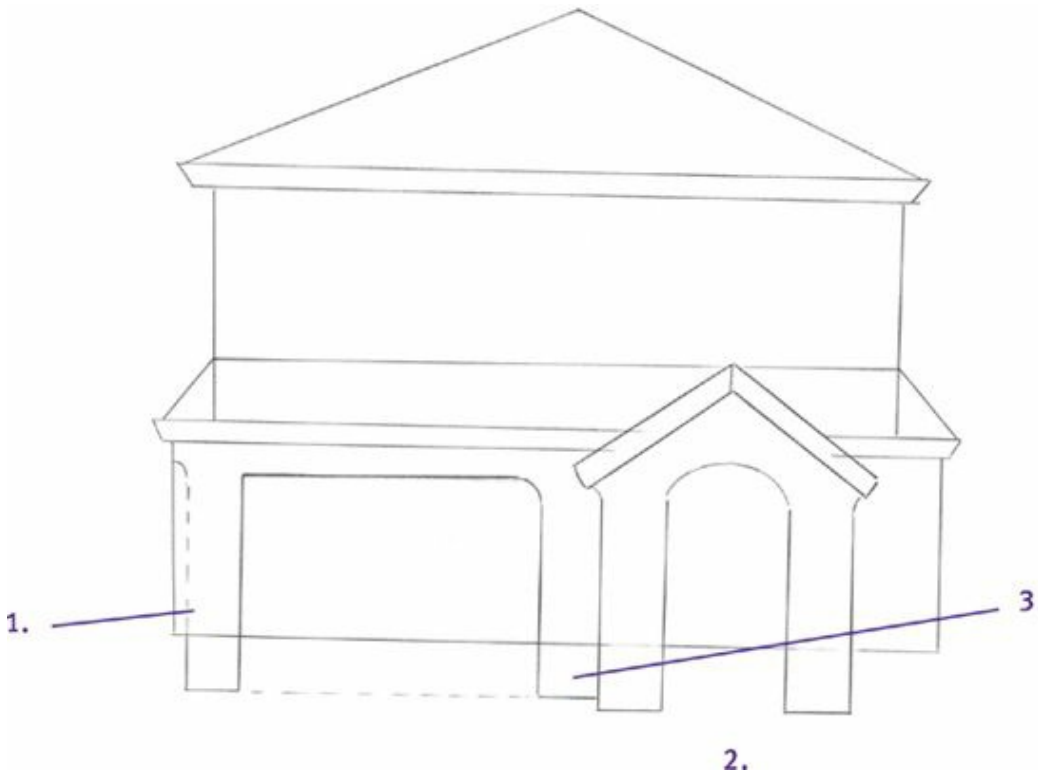
1. Start off with a simple rectangle for the base of the house. Add a base on top of the rectangle. This "top" indicates the foundation of the second floor.



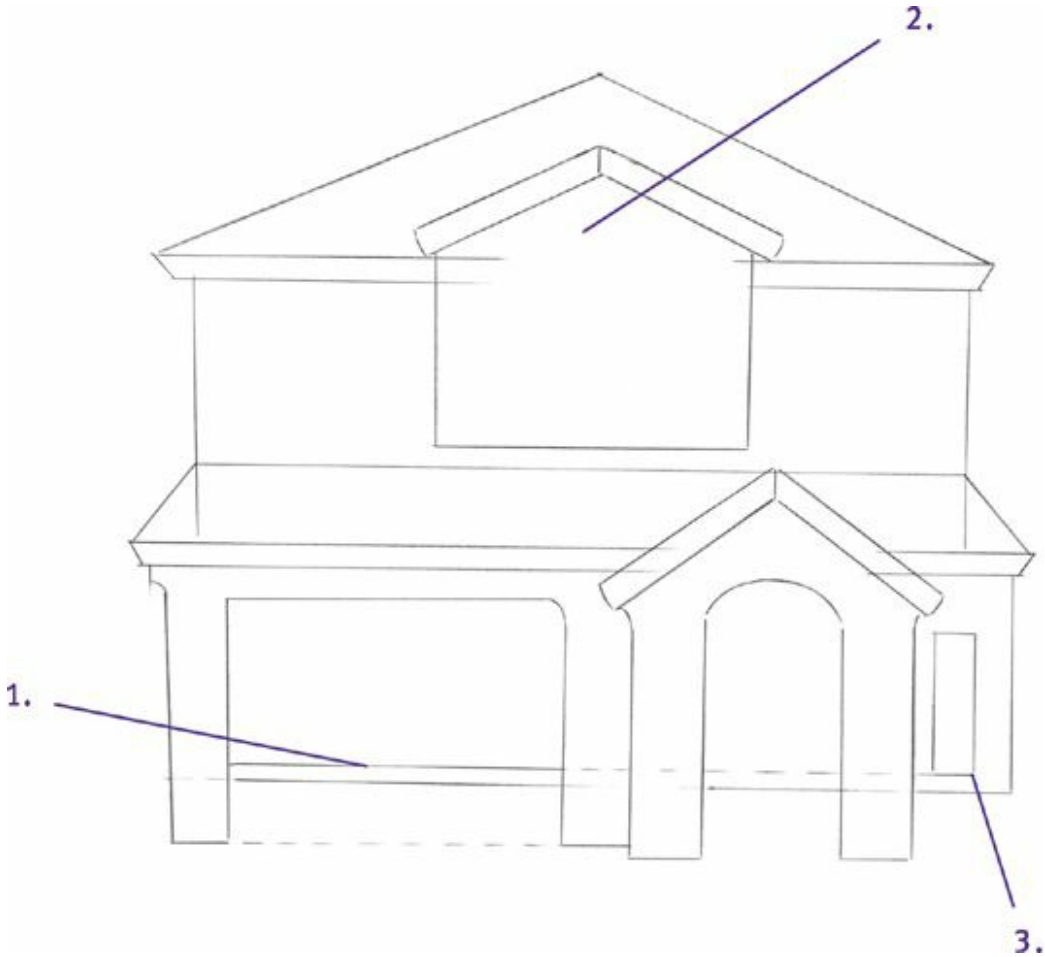
1. Add a second floor on top of the first one.



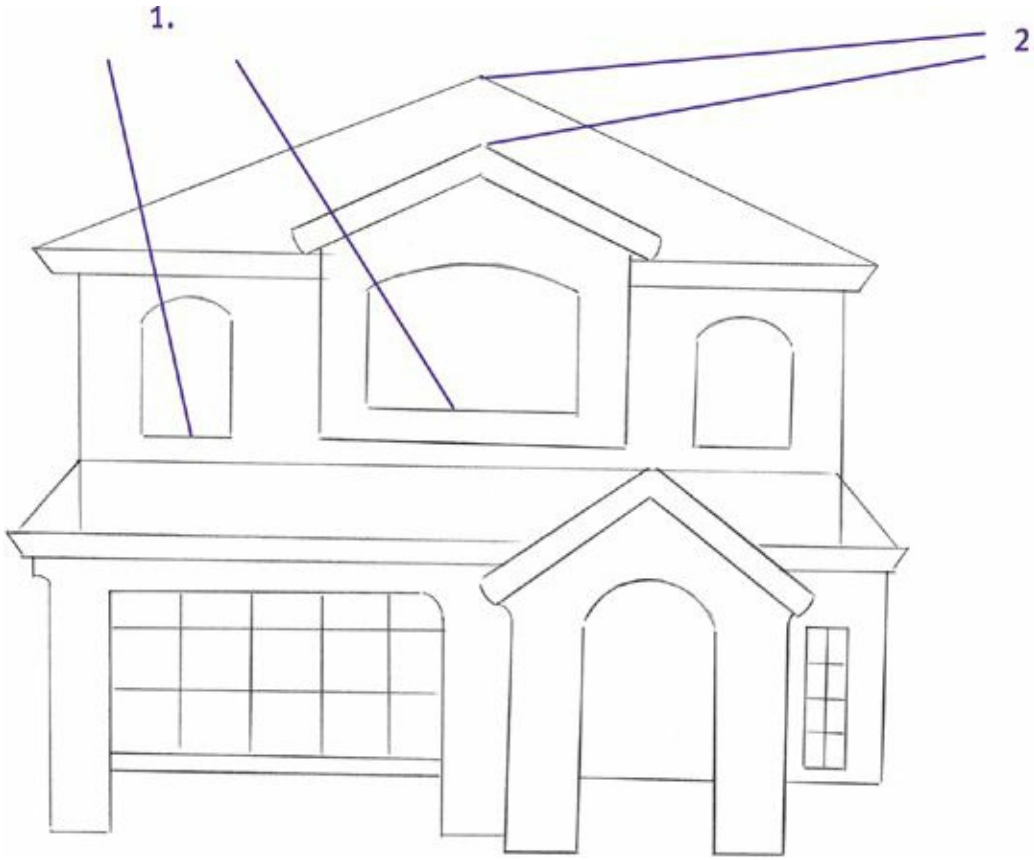
1. The base is slightly wider than the second floor.
2. Add a significantly pitched roof.



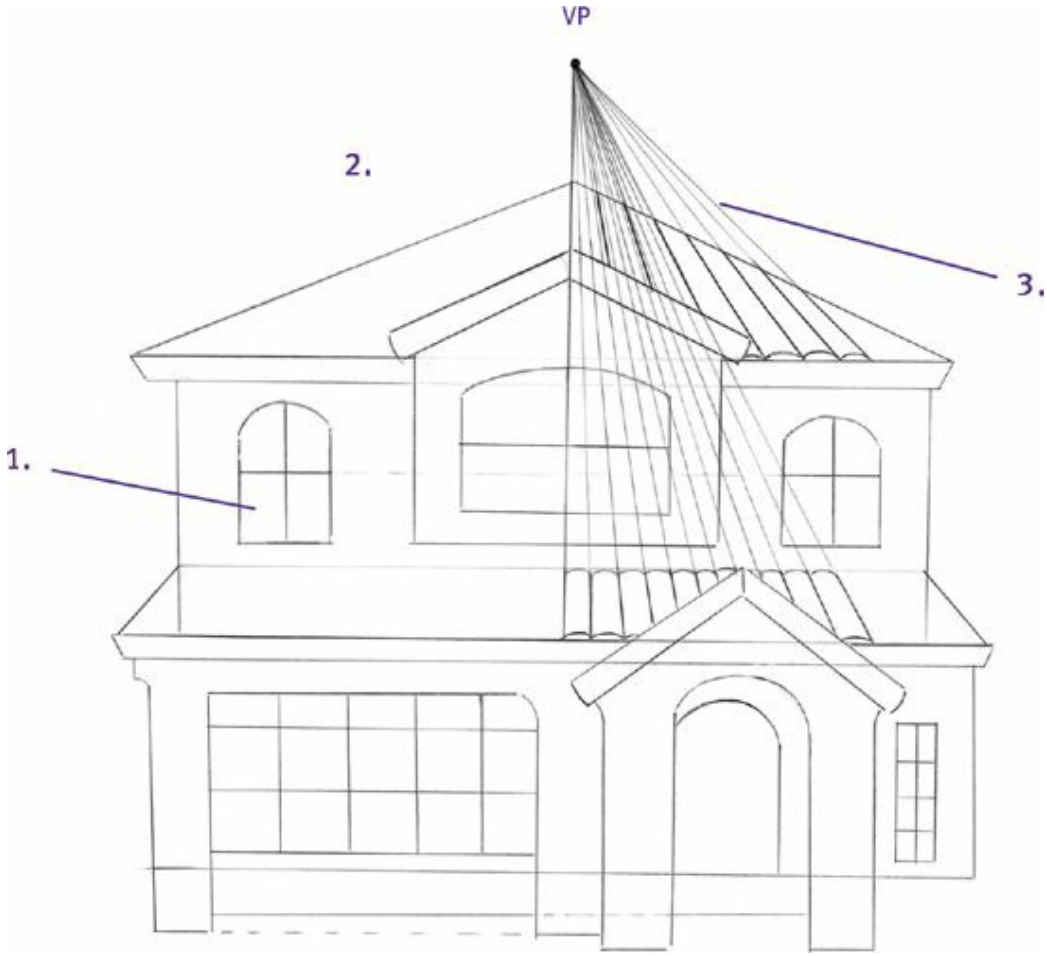
1. Shave a little off the side. (This is purely for aesthetics, but it's worth it.)
2. Draw a classic Spanish-style entrance. The archway is positioned off-center.
3. Draw these columns out in front of the house, but just a touch behind the arched entrance.



1. Add a second line to indicate the bottom of a large window.
2. Second-floor window “bump-out.”
3. The bottom of this vertical window should be drawn on the same level as the line of the large window on the left side of the house. This unifies the design.

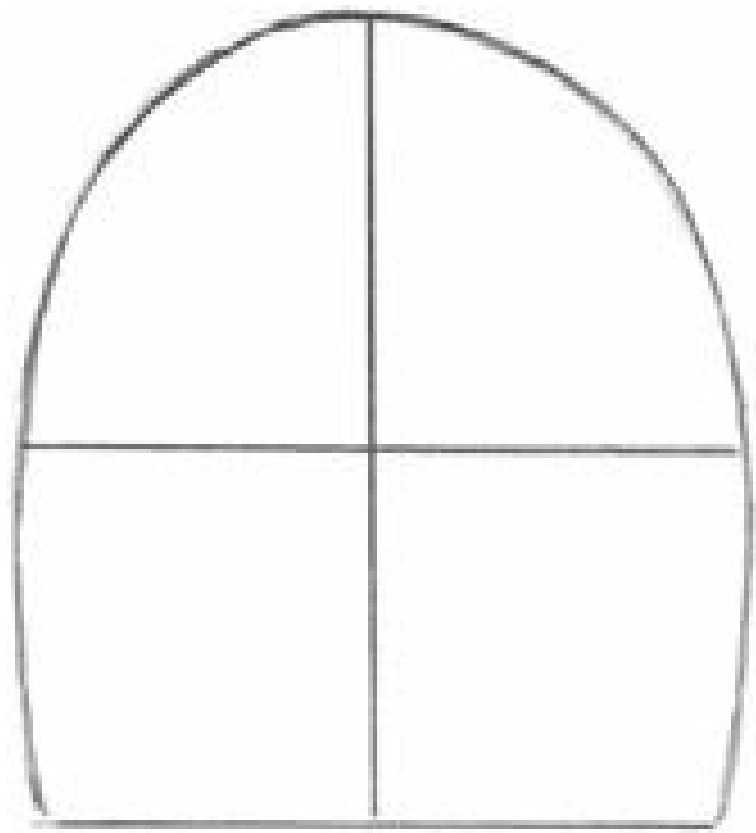


1. Both end windows are drawn on the same level, but the middle window is slightly higher.
2. Keep this window centered with the tip of the roof.

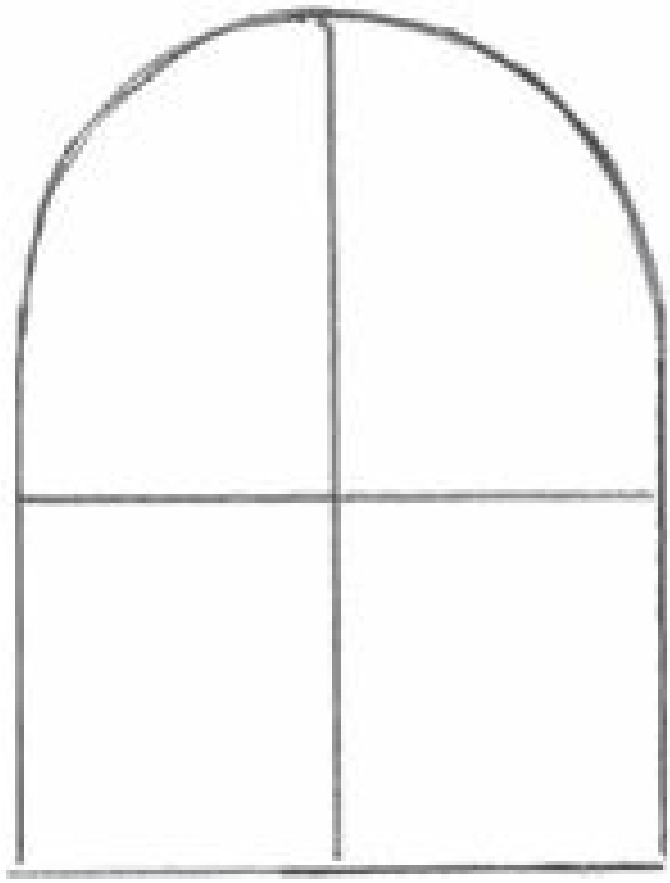


1. Add windowpanes.
2. Here's the vanishing point in one-point perspective. The same vanishing point is used for both rows of roof tiles, the lower floor and the upper floor.
3. If we were being strictly literal with our interpretation, the line of the top of the roof would appear bumpy, like the top of the lower roof. But the sleek silhouette of the smooth roof line looks better to me, which is why I have chosen to use it instead.

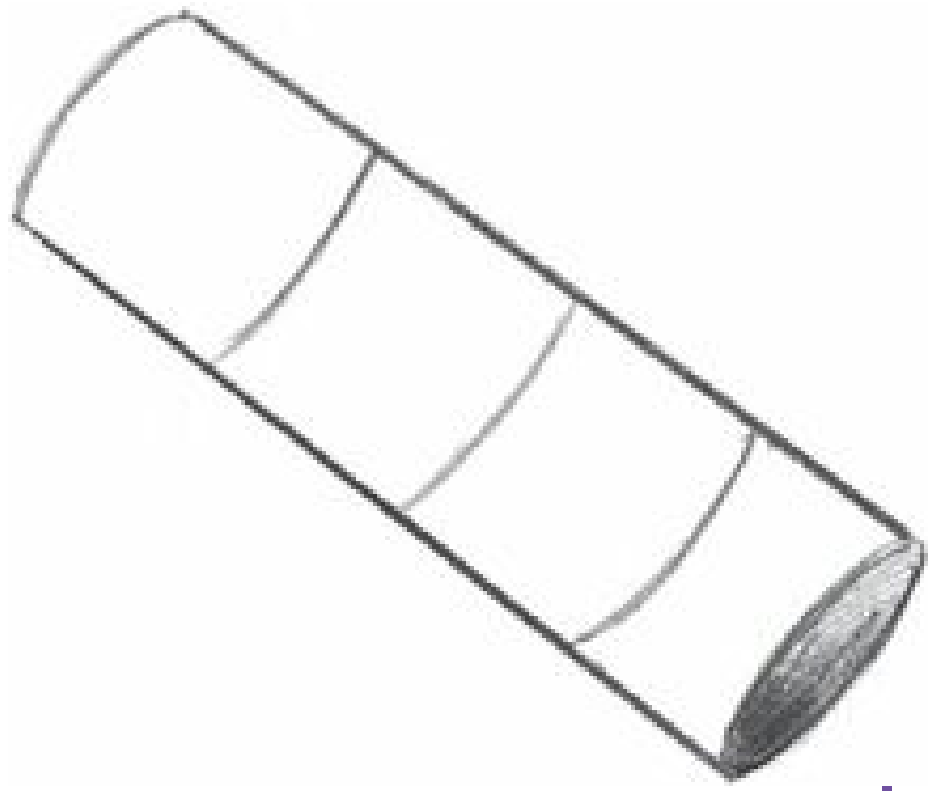
QUICK TIP Windows and Roof Tiles



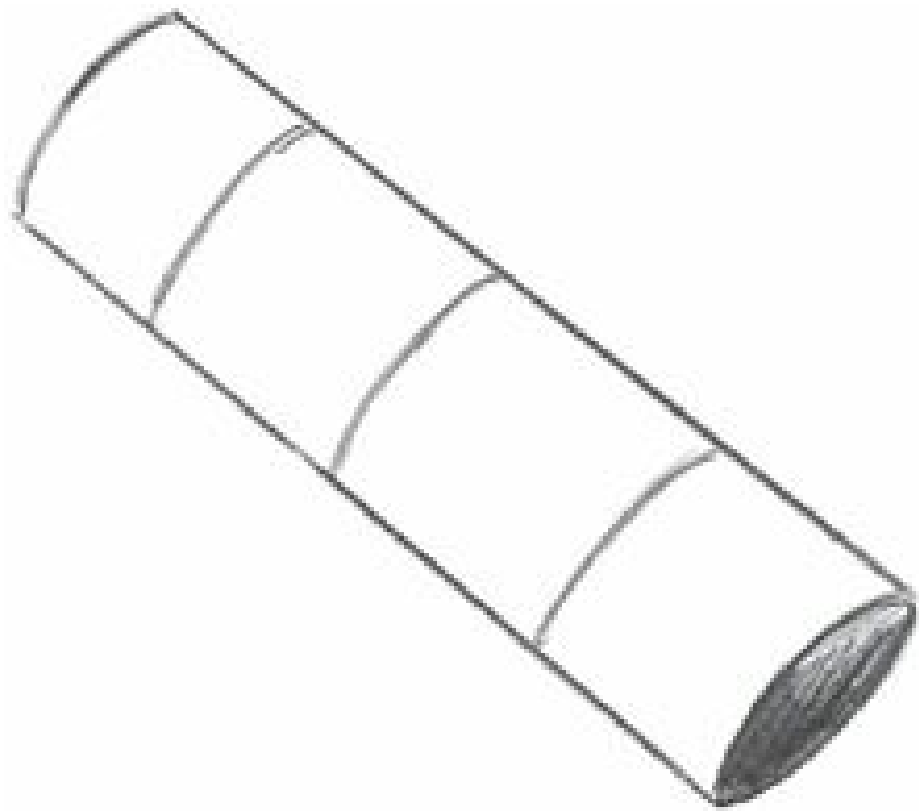
Incorrect Arched Windows. Do not draw a completely rounded outline.



Correct Arched Windows. Draw both sides ruler-straight; then draw freehand the top portion only.



Incorrectly Articulated Individual Tiles. The tiles are going in the wrong direction; they curve forward, opposing the direction of the opening of the cylinder.



Correctly Articulated Individual Tiles. The tiles curve back, just like the curve at the mouth of the cylinder.

Note that the door is positioned slightly to the left of the archway. This adjusts for perspective.

THE STILL LIFE

A still-life drawing is a work of art typically depicting commonplace objects. The composition of the scene is as much a part of the viewer's experience as is the detail and treatment of the objects.

First, the viewer takes in the overall composition of the picture, but as the viewer's eye lingers, it focuses on individual elements. Therefore, each piece in a still life must be carefully rendered.

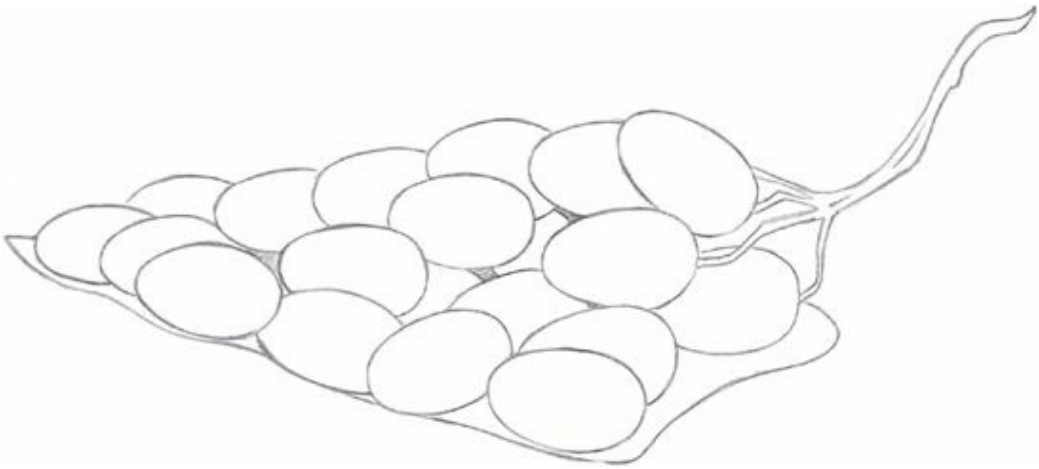
Bowl of Fruit

A bowl of fruit is an excellent starting place. You can create a reference model of it in your house in about five minutes. The shapes are familiar, the subject matter is pleasing. It's easy to draw, and it lends itself to creative shading.

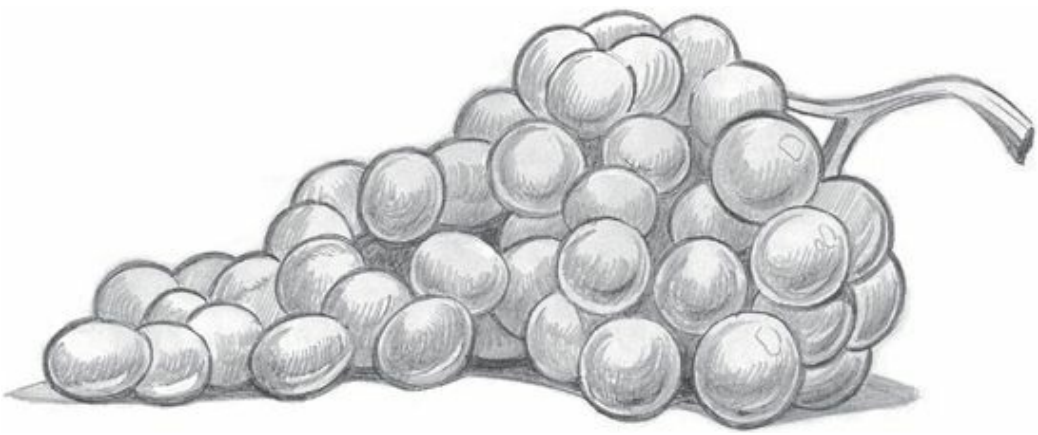
As a general rule of thumb, the fruit should appear to be:

- Easily recognizable. For example, avoid choosing things like whole oranges. They are hard to distinguish in black-and-white drawings, as their shape is generic.
- Ripe. You want to show each piece of fruit at its plumpest.
- Fresh. Make them appear either moist or dewy or with a shine or glow, and shade to suggest a deep, vibrant color.
- Bountiful. No sparsely distributed grapes or berries, for example.

GRAPES



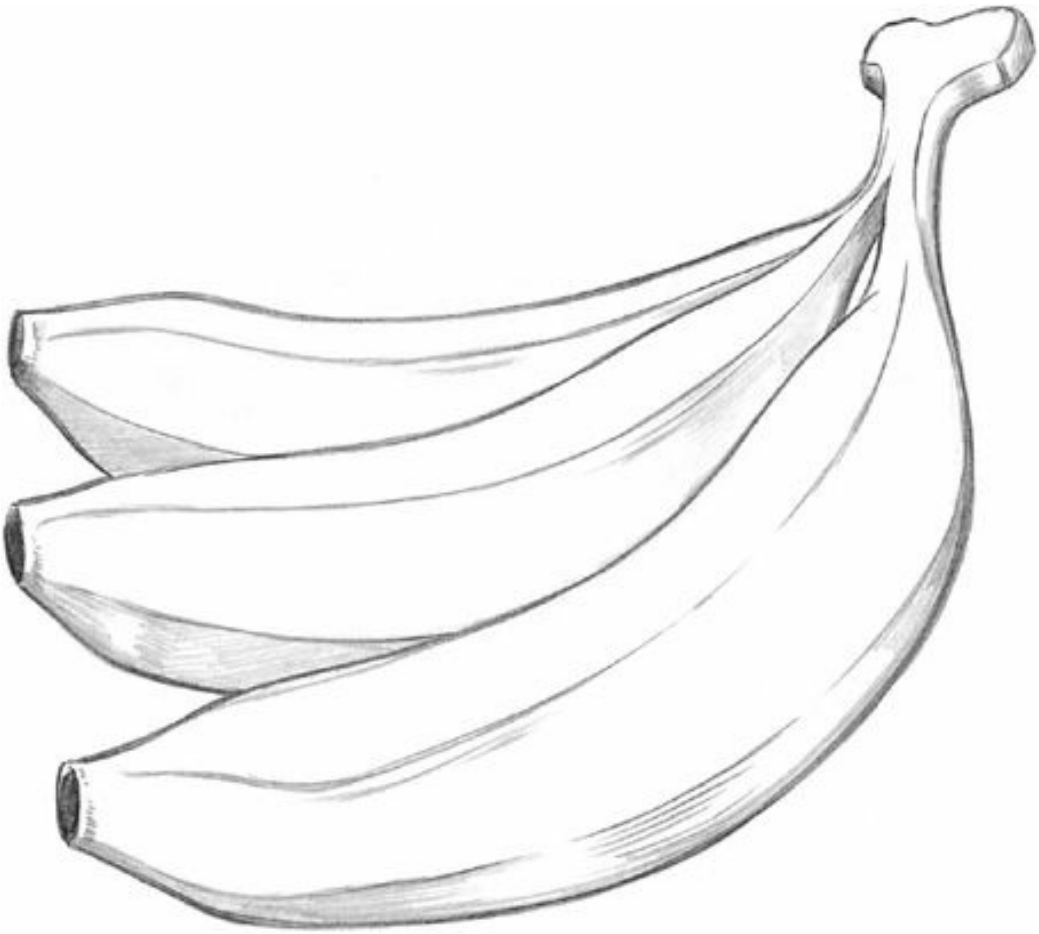
Oval-shaped grapes are best shown on their sides. Note that there are few gaps between the grapes, and most, if not all, of the vines are hidden throughout the bunch.



Round grapes work particularly well with heavy shading, because the shine is evenly dispensed around each object. Be sure to leave the top of each grape light, and the bottom dark, as a reaction to typical overhead lighting. Note that we blacken out the gaps in the bunch, rather than leave them empty.

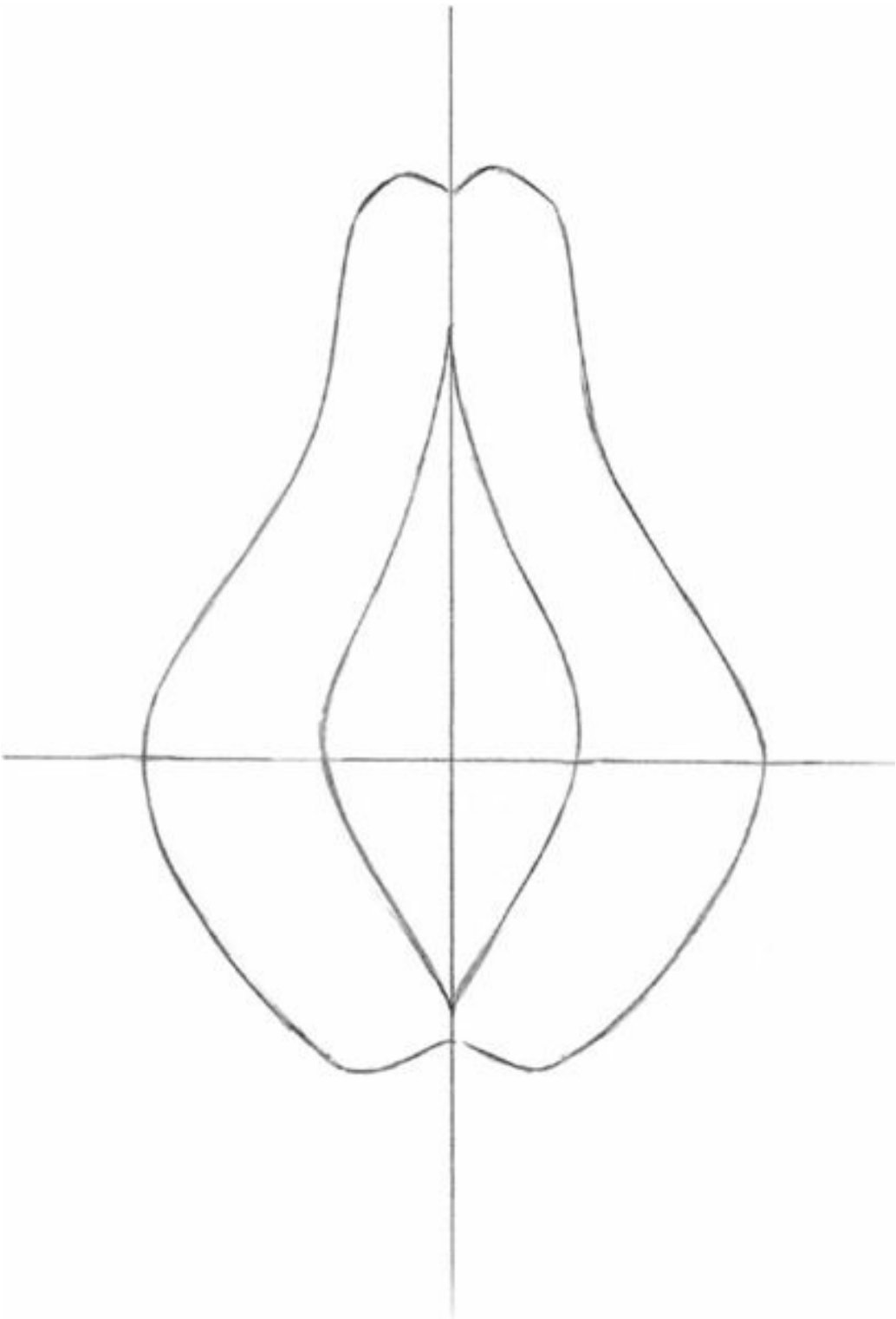
BANANA

Bananas have clearly defined sides. They are also "pinched" at the ends, with flat, black caps at the unattached ends.

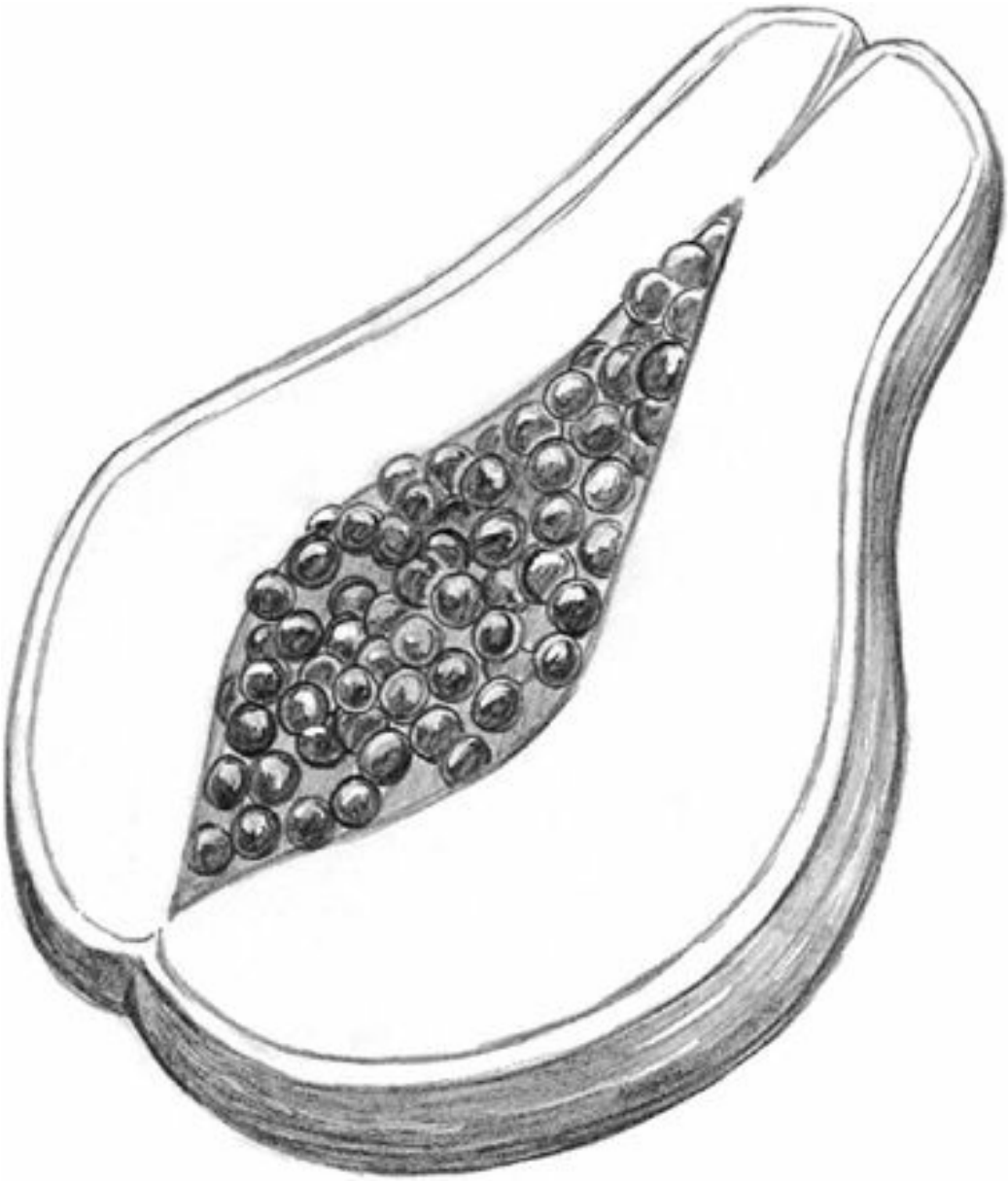


Use shading sparingly but with definitive, long streaks on the bottom plane of each piece.

PAPAYA



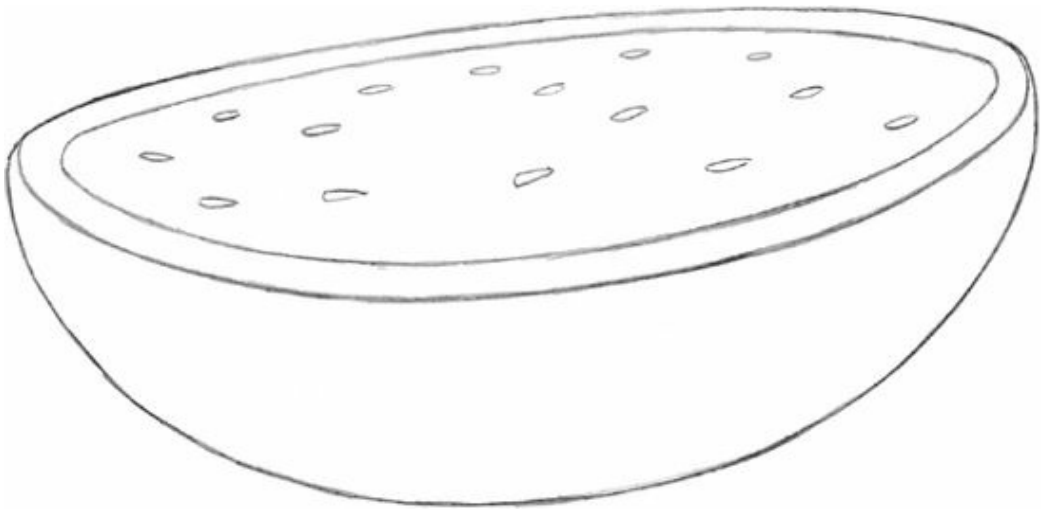
Indent on top and at the bottom. The fruit is widest two-thirds of the way down.



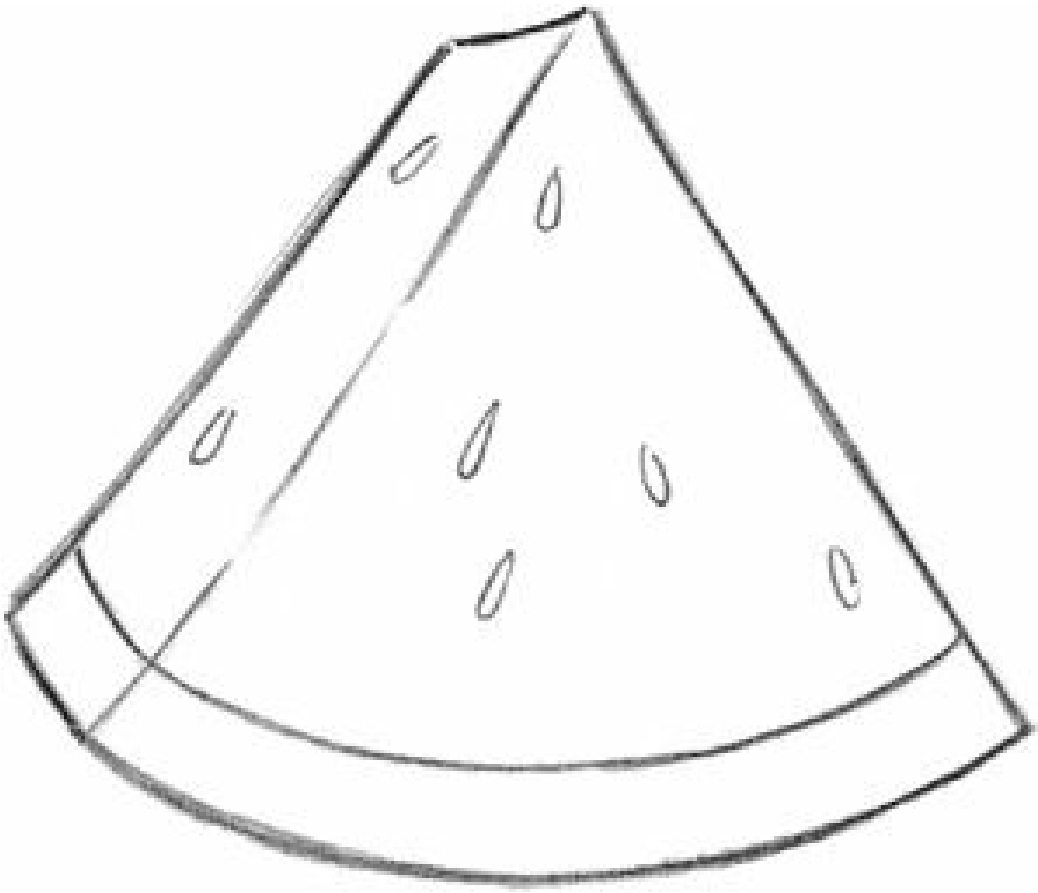
A copious amount of small, black, wet-looking seeds are wedged into a narrow opening in the center of the fruit. Add a little white shine onto the seeds to make them look moist. Note that the skin is shown as a thin, separate layer.

WATERMELON

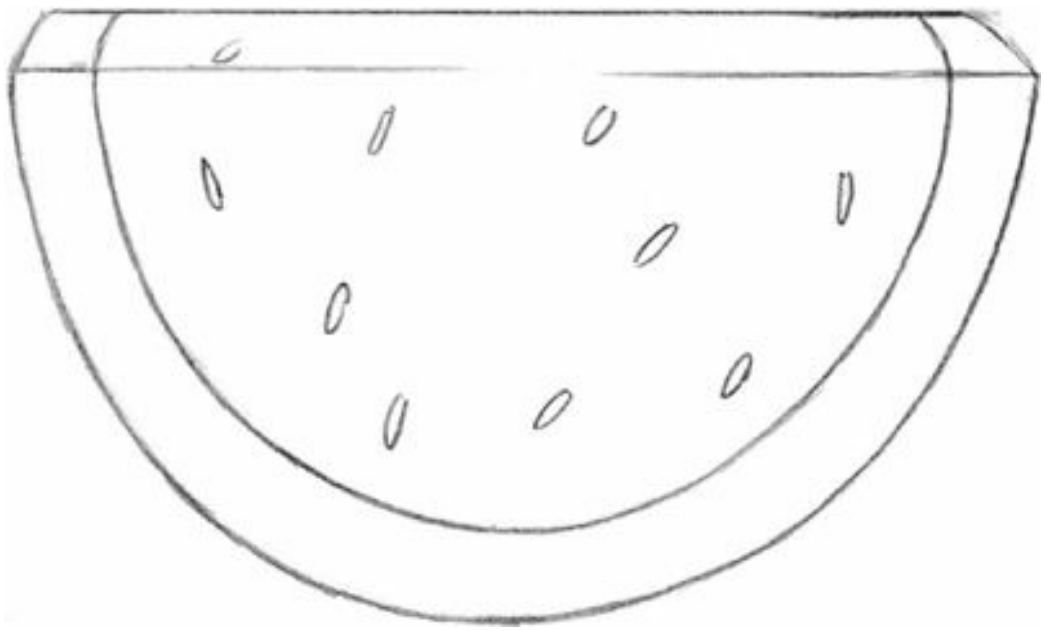
Watermelons are cut in many different yet signature styles. Each cut features a little bit of an angle, which calls for a touch of perspective.



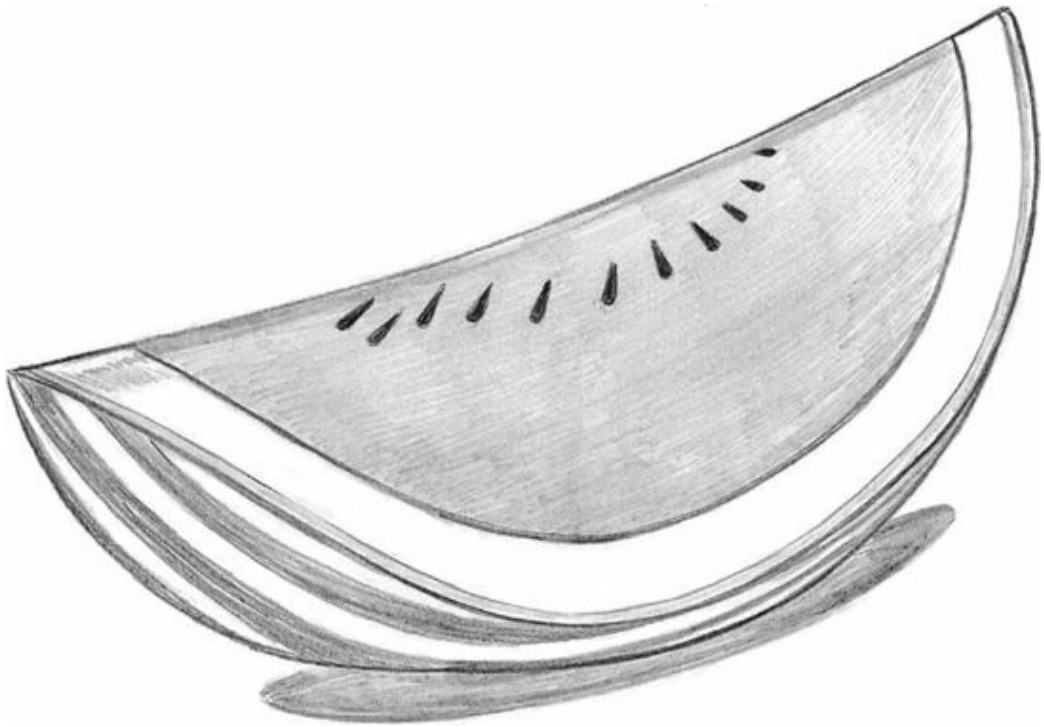
Half Cut. Flatten out the face on top into an elongated oval. Show the seeds getting smaller and closer together as they appear to recede along the surface of the fruit.



Triangle Slice. Note the hard shift in angle along the top and the bottom. Place seeds on both sides of the melon.



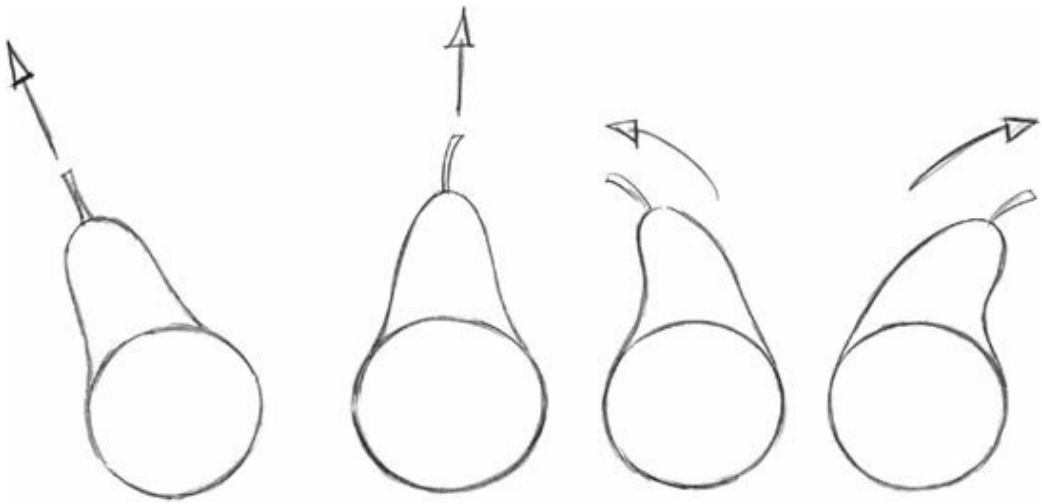
Half Slice. A semicircle, with a flattened top, shows dimension.

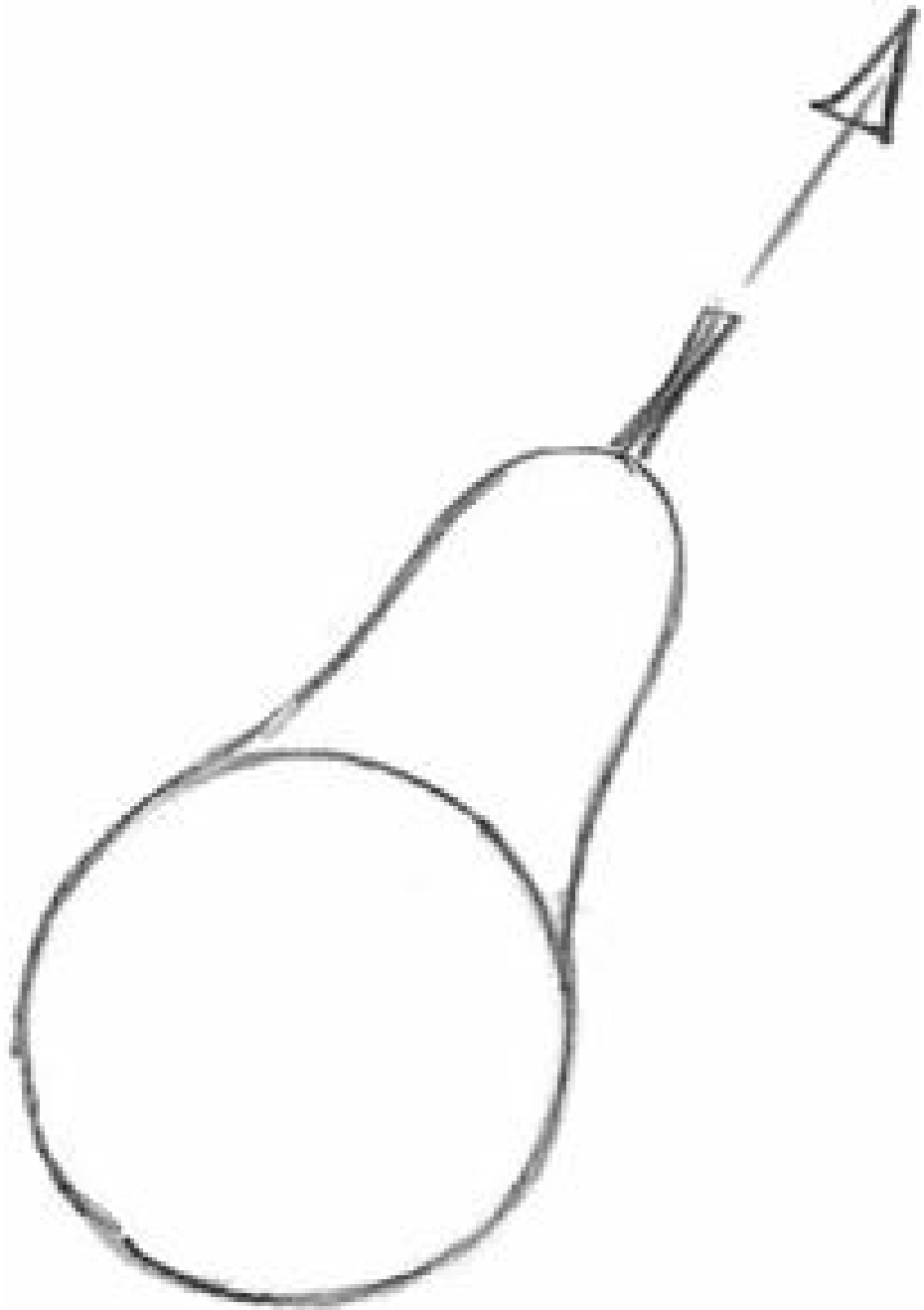


Quartered Melon. Note the placement of the seeds, forming a half-circle around the cut line.

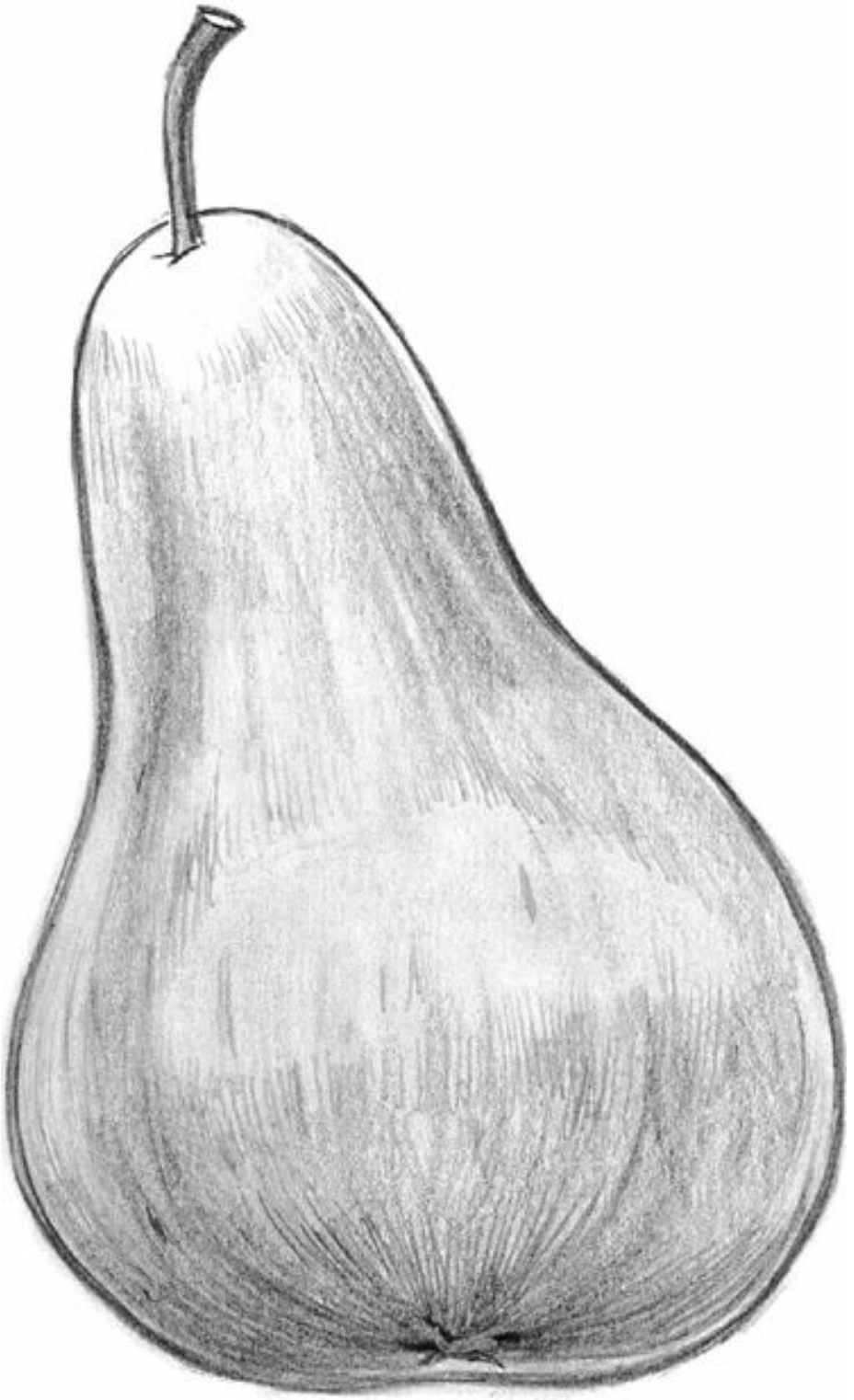
PEAR

The pear is an often overlooked fruit in art, which is too bad, because it is a very recognizable form. It's also a forgiving shape—you can draw it a little lopsided, and it will still come out looking like a pear!





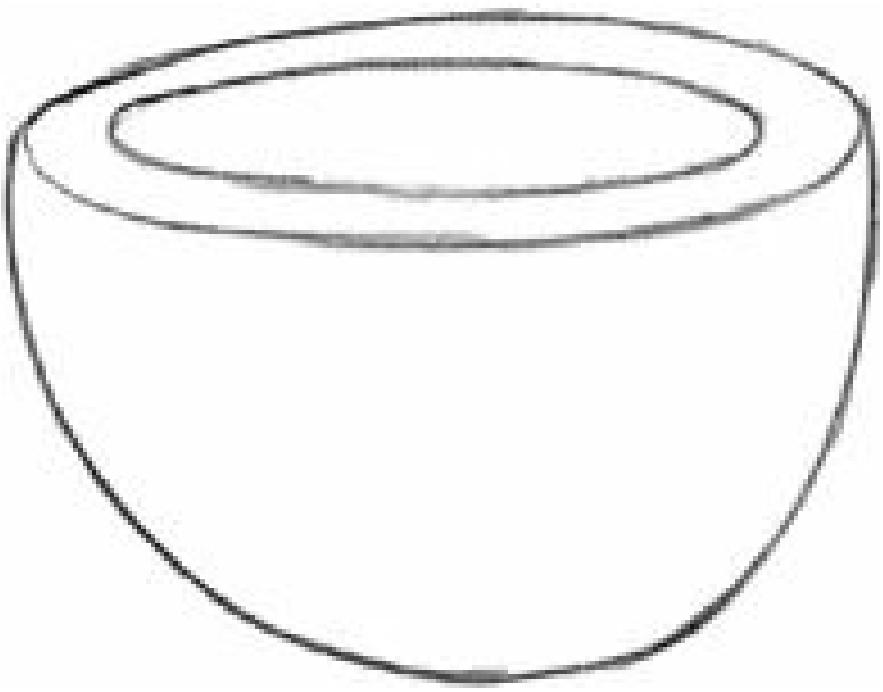
The pear often leans a little, the top tending to favor one side or the other. The bottom is a circle.



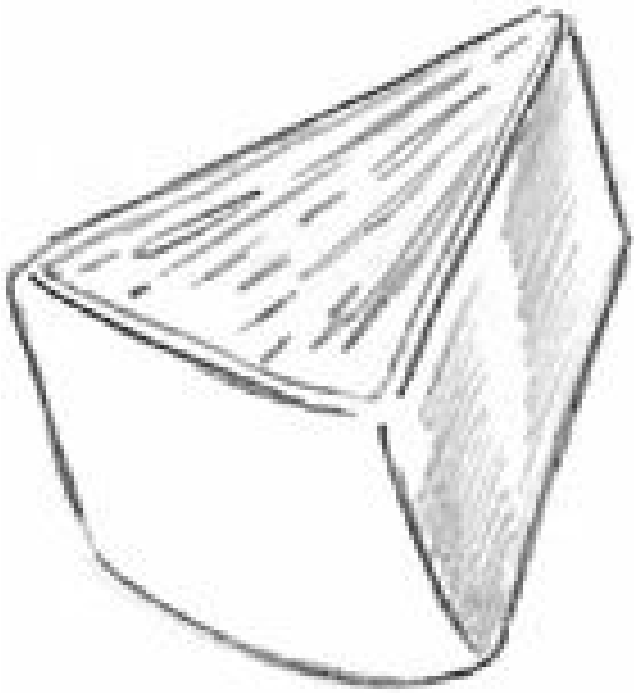
Note that there's a subtle suggestion of an indentation at the bottom of the pear.

GRAPEFRUIT

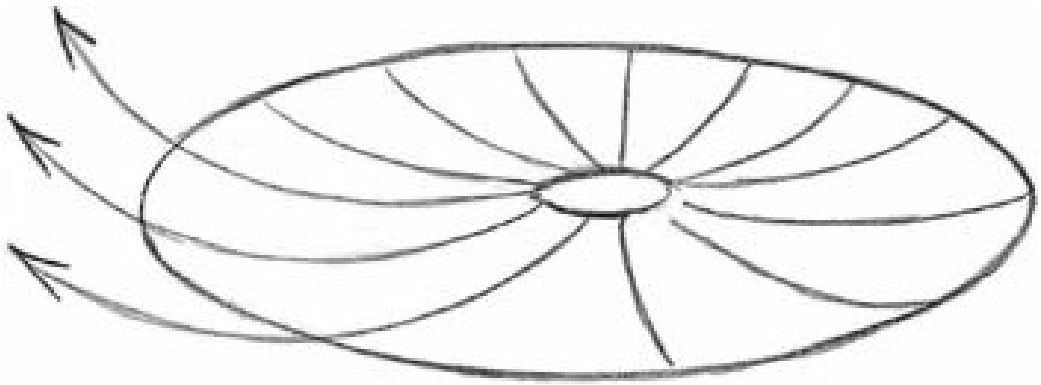
The grapefruit is almost unrecognizable, unless it is shown cut in half. Think of the face of the fruit as a wheel on its side and the middle as the hub.



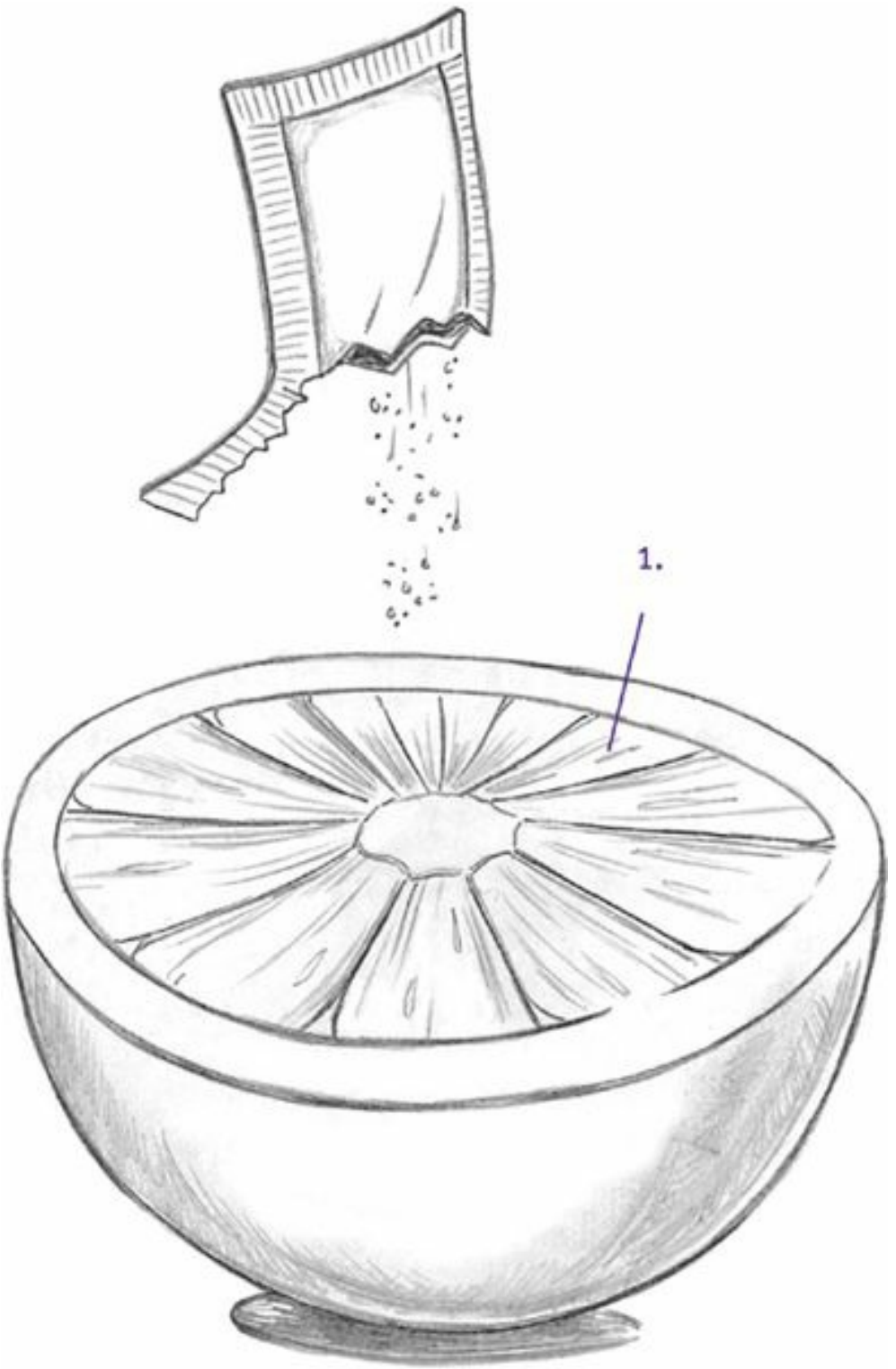
The skin is thick.



Indicate little streaks of pulp in each wedge.



The center hub, drawn as an oval in perspective, is placed toward the rear, rather than the center. That's what causes the individual pieces behind it to be drawn so small.

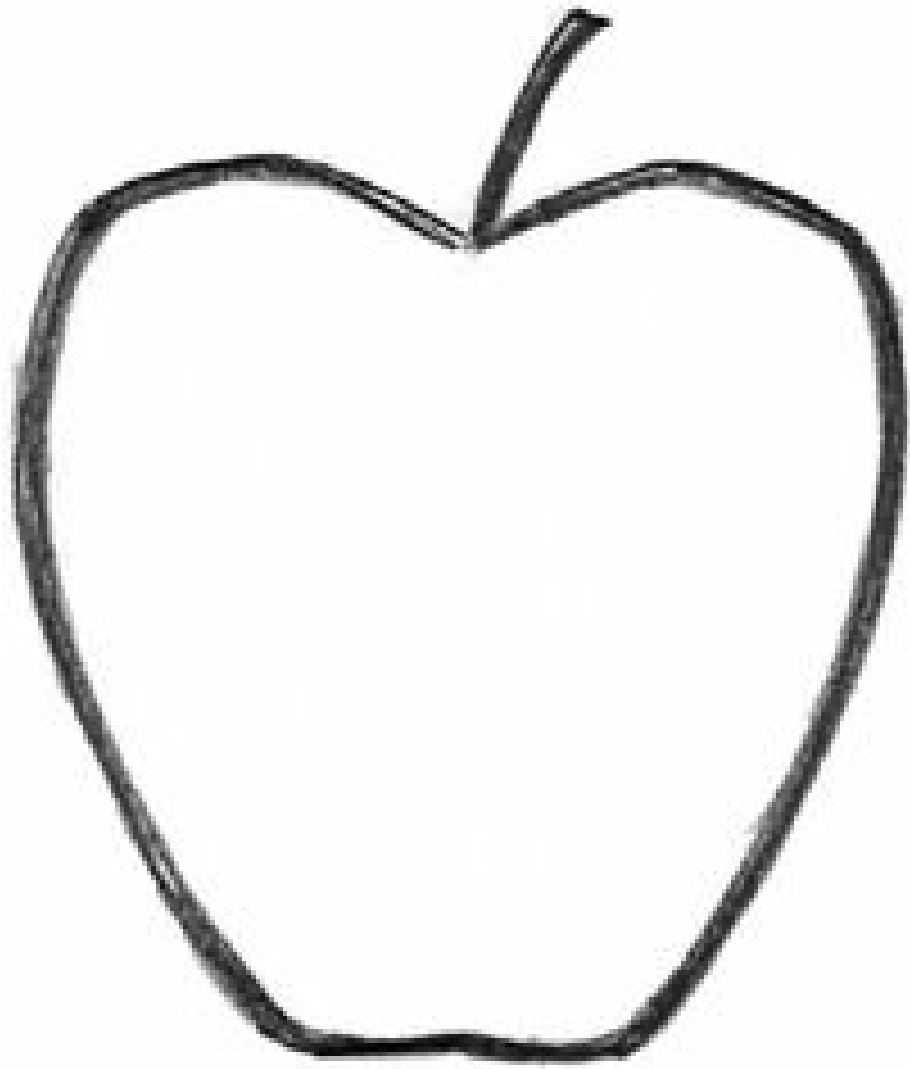

1.

1. The lines, which are radiating outward from the center, are slightly concave.

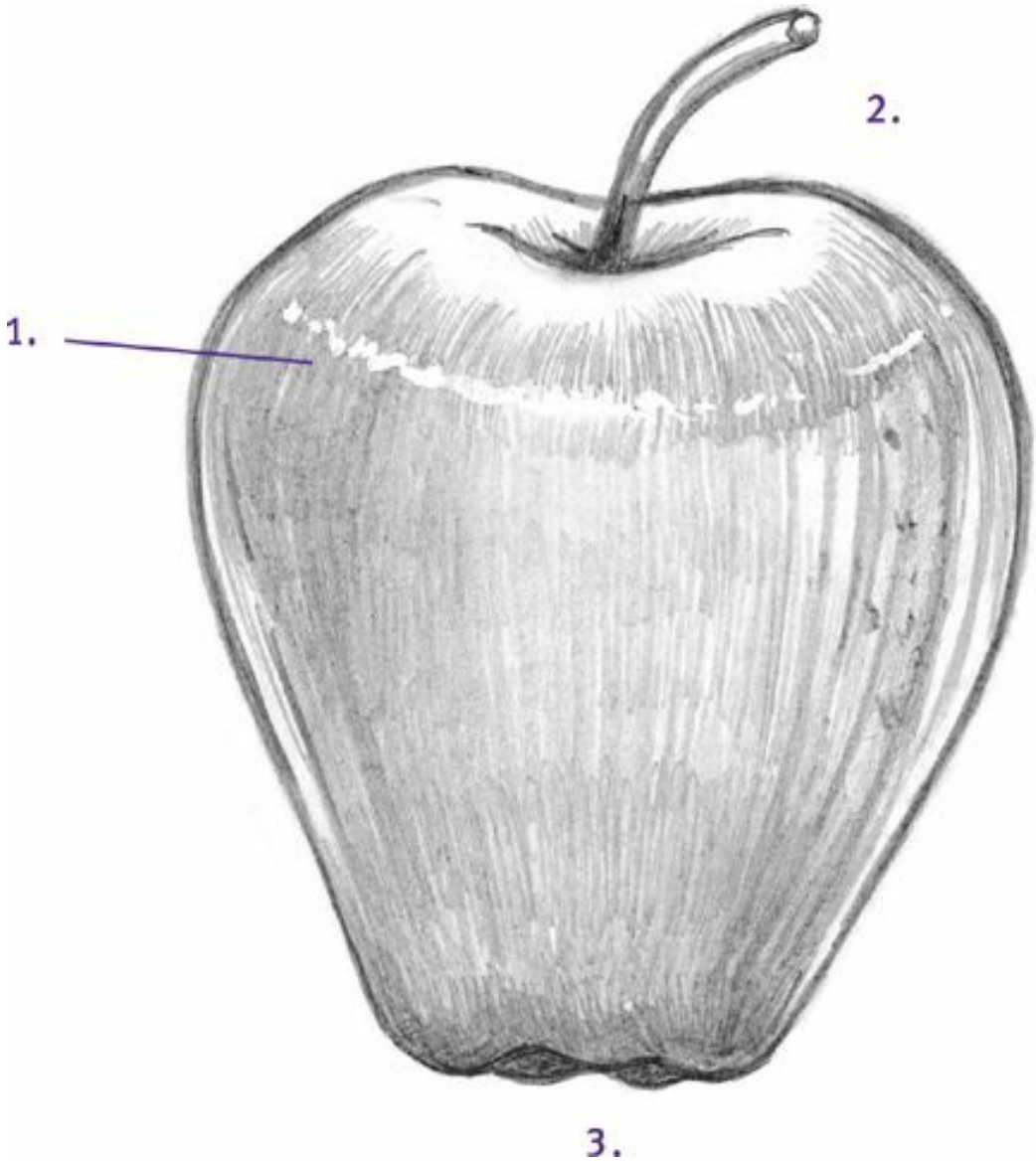
APPLE

Apples are a good, strong shape. But don't settle for a circle with a stem, or you'll wind up with something that looks like a cherry that grew next to a nuclear power plant. Here are a few hints for drawing a more realistic apple:

Correct. The stem occurs inside of the outline of the apple.



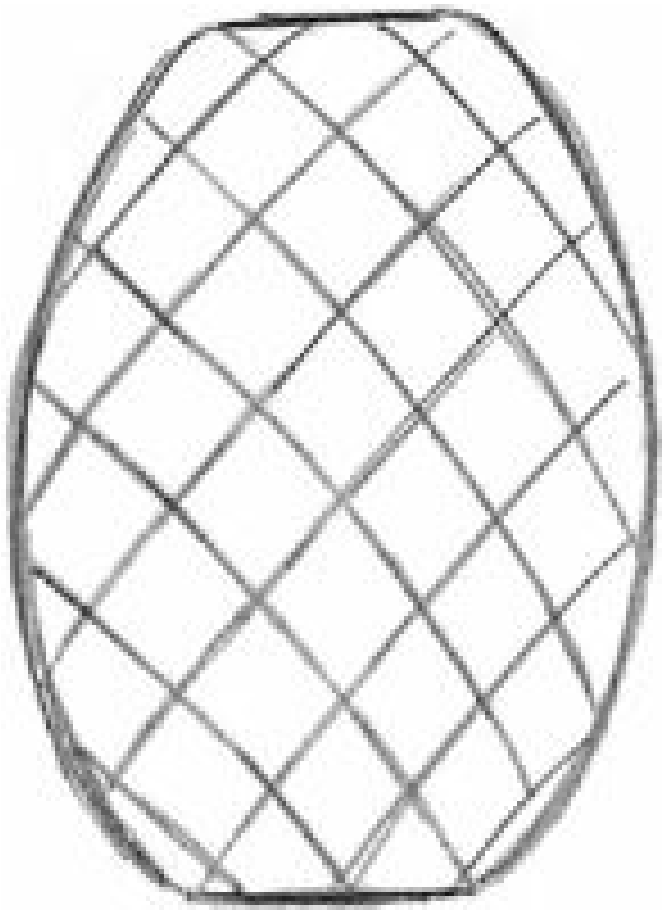
Incorrect. The stem is flush with the outline of the apple.



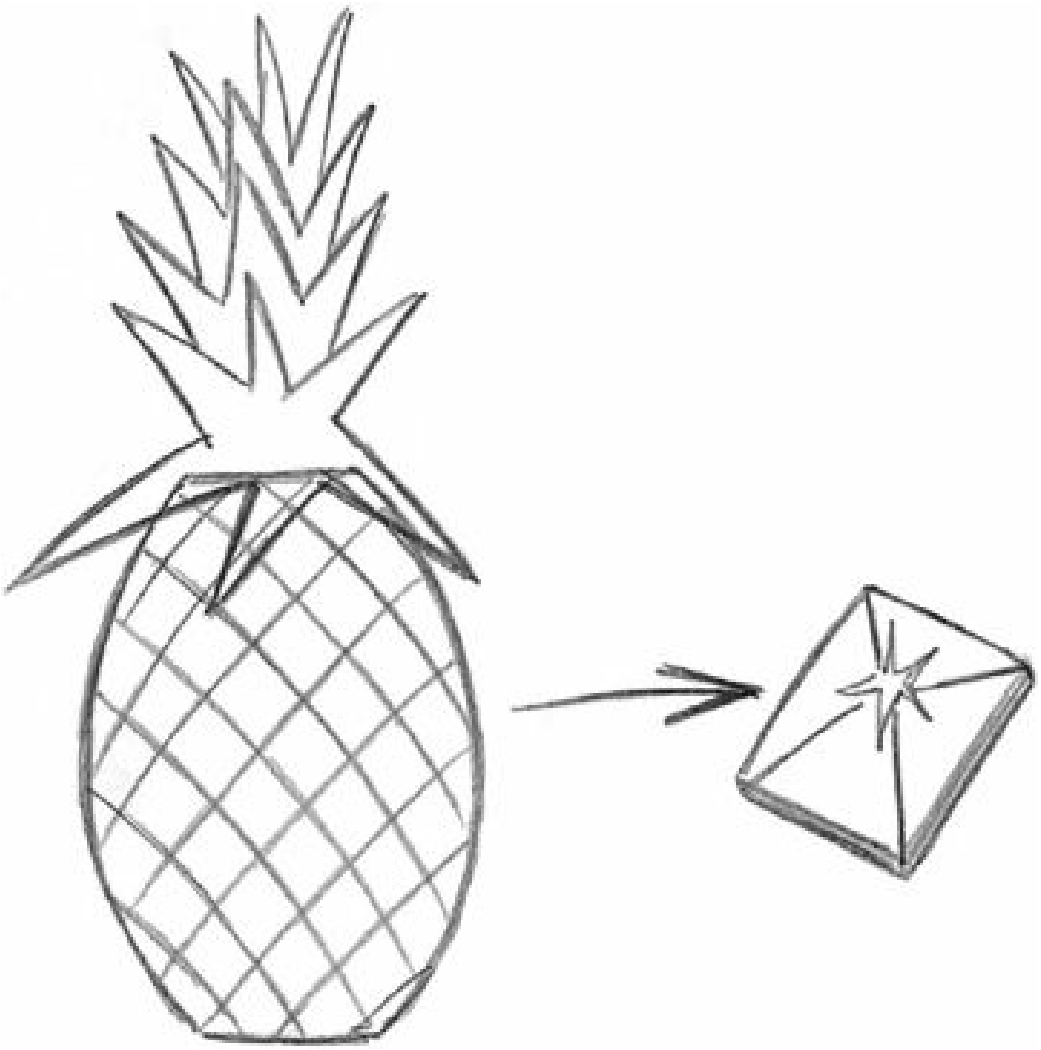
1. Vary the shading of the skin of the apple, showing streaks.
2. Stem is curved.
3. The bottom is bumpy. It is also the darkest area of the skin.

PINEAPPLE

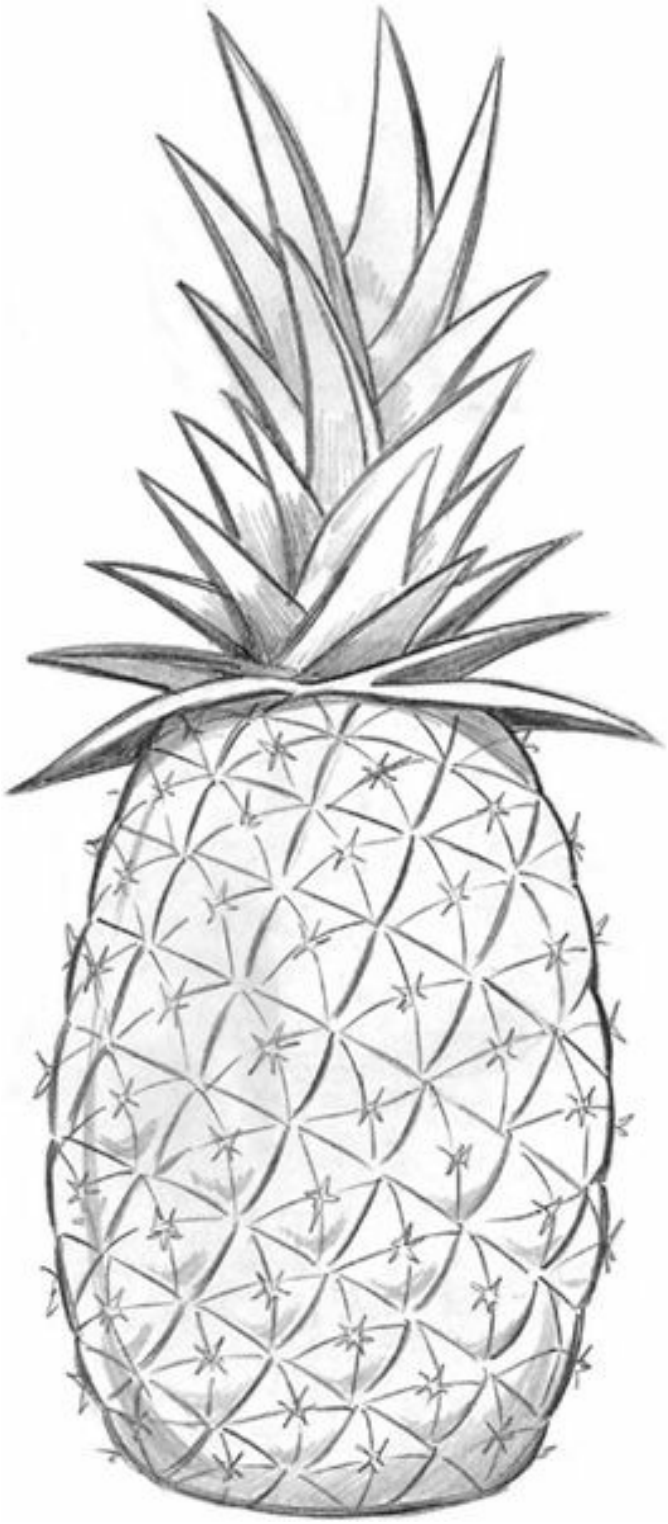
There's no mistaking the pineapple for any other type of fruit. The trick is in establishing its vaselike shape at the outset.



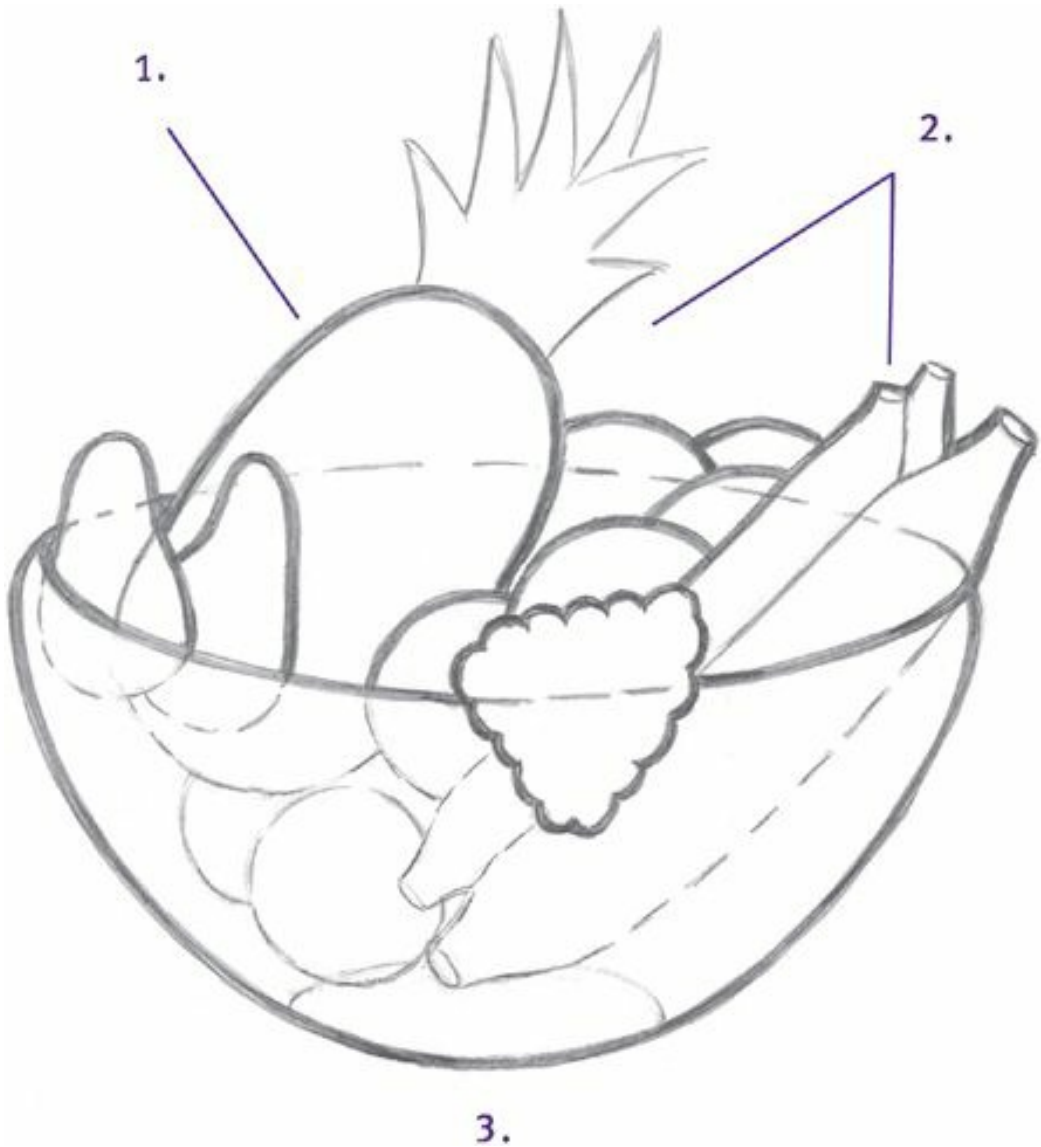
The pineapple is shaped like a crystal-cut vase. The cross-hatching is drawn on two opposing diagonals. Be sure to use slightly curved lines.



The layered plant top is of considerable length. Don't underestimate it. Each individual "tile" is crossed with two lines and has a small, ragged, starlike shape at the center. Wait to add this last detail until you have the rest of the pineapple finished.



Note that the underside of the leaves have been shaded darkly, because overhead light cannot reach there.



1. Most of the elements are placed at an angle, which makes them appear more natural, rather than posed.
2. The picture is balanced. The pineapple on the left side is balanced by the bunch of three bananas on the right side.
3. The fruit is placed in the front, middle, and back, creating a tapered look (depth).

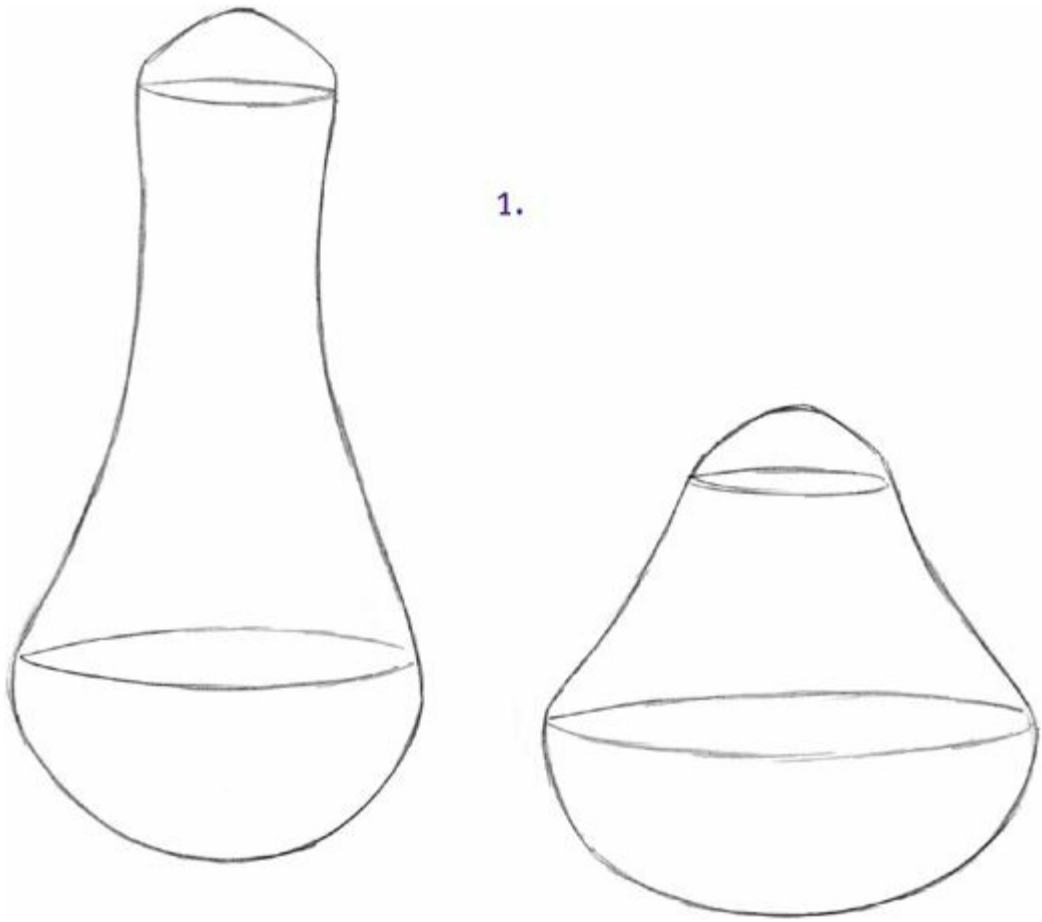
The shading is darker deeper in the bowl, as less light is present. The shadows under the bowl, as well as under the two grapes on the outside of the bowl, are cast in the same direction. The bowl is shaded along its side, evenly, for a natural look.

Classic Tea Set

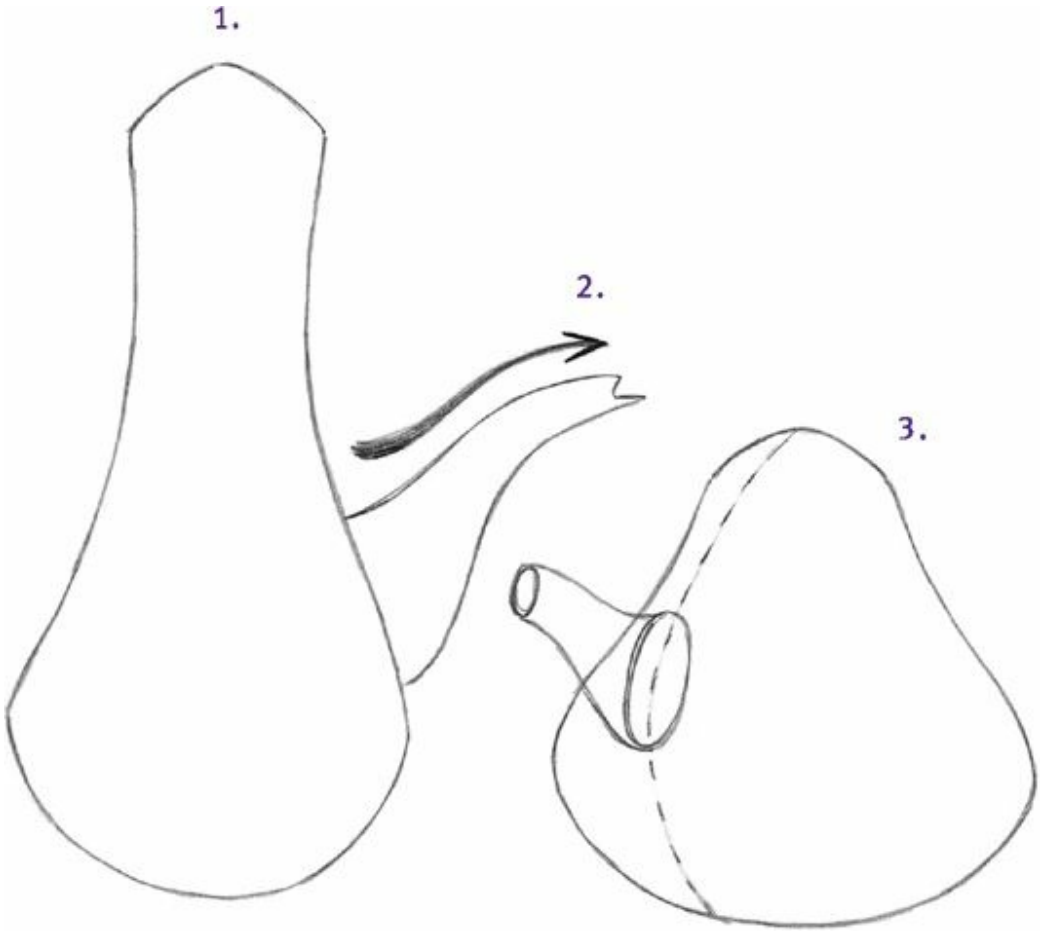
A tea set is an elegant and refined subject for still life. Like the bowl of fruit, these are somewhat forgiving shapes. If your teapot looks a little wider, or taller, than mine, that's okay. In addition to the aesthetics of the individual pieces, you can turn them to whatever angle you choose to create an attractive composition.

Take note of the angle at which we are viewing the tea set. We, the viewers, are positioned at eye level with the cups (seen starting on this page). This means that we are barely able to look over the top and into the openings. Therefore, the circumference around the cups must be drawn as slender ovals.

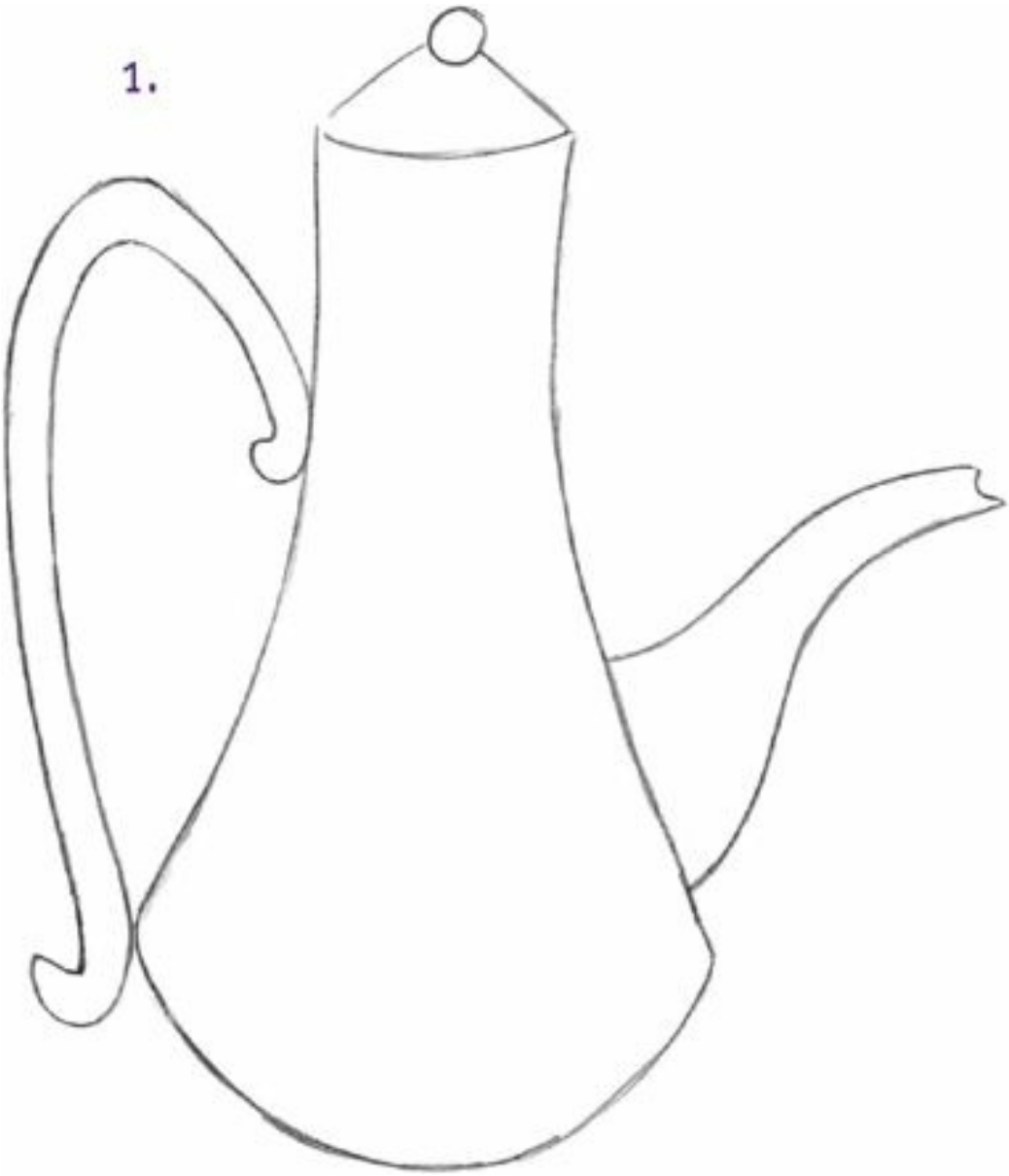
You can also ensure that each teapot appears round and symmetrical by drawing two ovals inside the initial constructions (see this page).



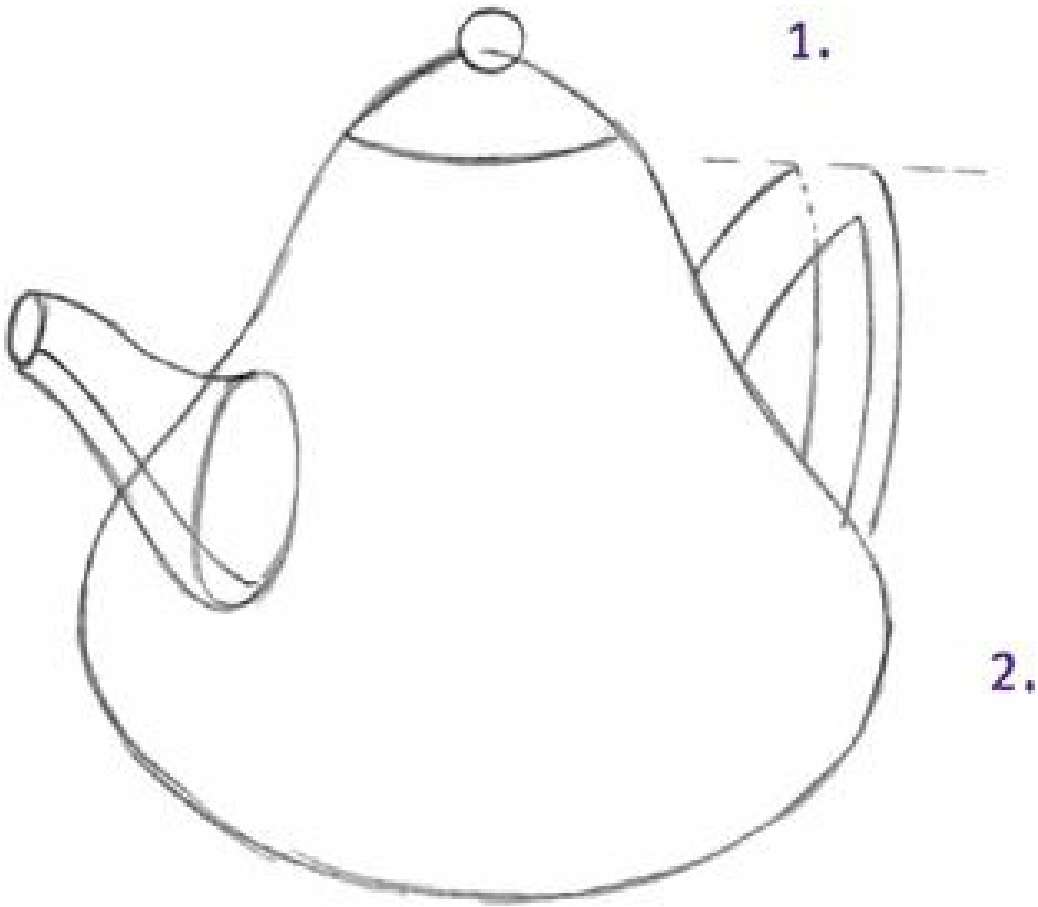
1. Draw two horizontal ovals to keep the contours of the outlines even on both sides and to help you visualize the two pitchers as round and three-dimensional.



1. To create visual variety, the coffeepot is positioned in a side view, as opposed to the teapot, which is in a 3/4 view.
2. In a side view, you can see the fluted spout.
3. Draw a sketch line to center the teapot's spout on the rounded surface.



1. The entire handle of the coffeepot is visible in a side view.



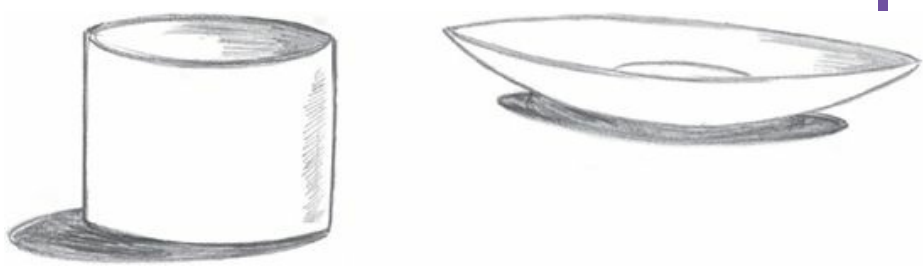
1. Draw a sketch line to indicate the level of the top of the handle.
2. Because the teapot is turned to a 3/4 view, part of the handle is obscured.

1. Although the objects overlap, we have allowed breathing space between them. A cramped layout is an uncomfortable look.
2. We unify the overall image by overlapping the individual pieces.

Complete the scene by adding a creamer and sugar bowl.

Subtle shading is used on the curving parts of an object to create the appearance of roundness. By varying the darkness of the shading, you add a rich quality to the drawing, which pulls the viewer in. Note that the shadows under each object are cast in the same direction, because the light source is the same for each object.

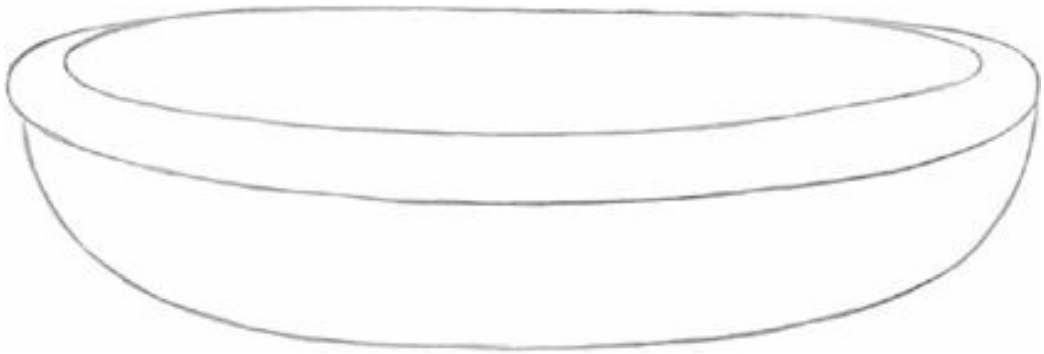
QUICK TIP Lighting



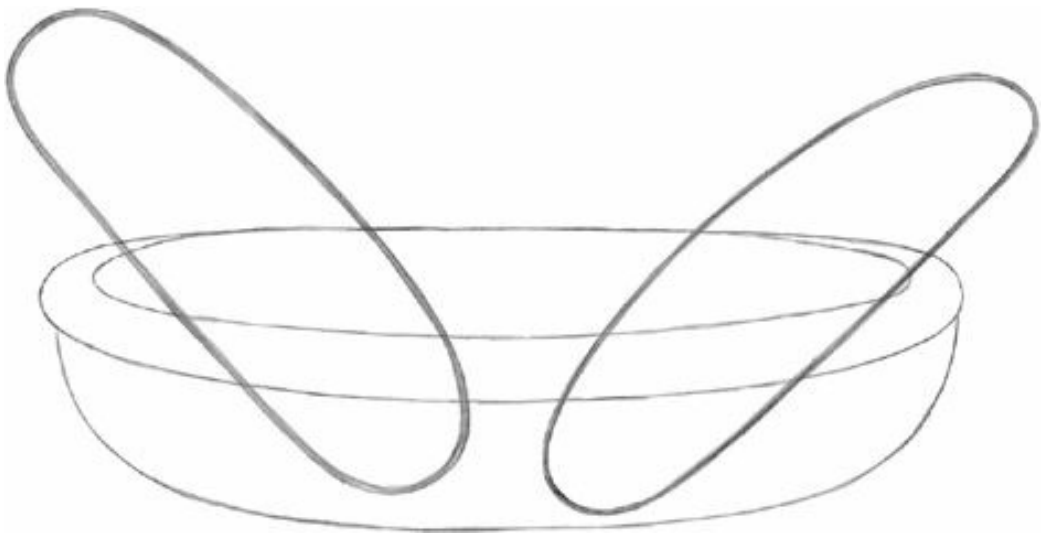
A note about lighting: An object that lies flat on a surface makes direct contact with the shadow. A raised object, like the circumference of the saucer, does not make contact with its own shadow.

Bread Basket

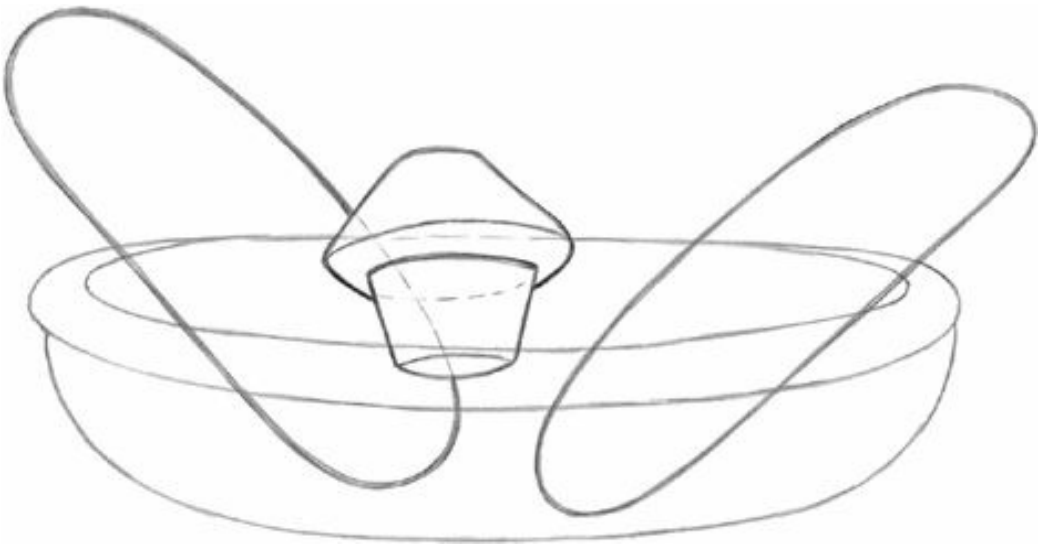
At first glance, the position of the elements in this still life might look random. The truth is, it requires a bit of work to make objects appear as though they naturally arrived in their rhythmic, harmonious positions. Let's examine the thought process that goes into composing a still life that looks accidental, but is posed.



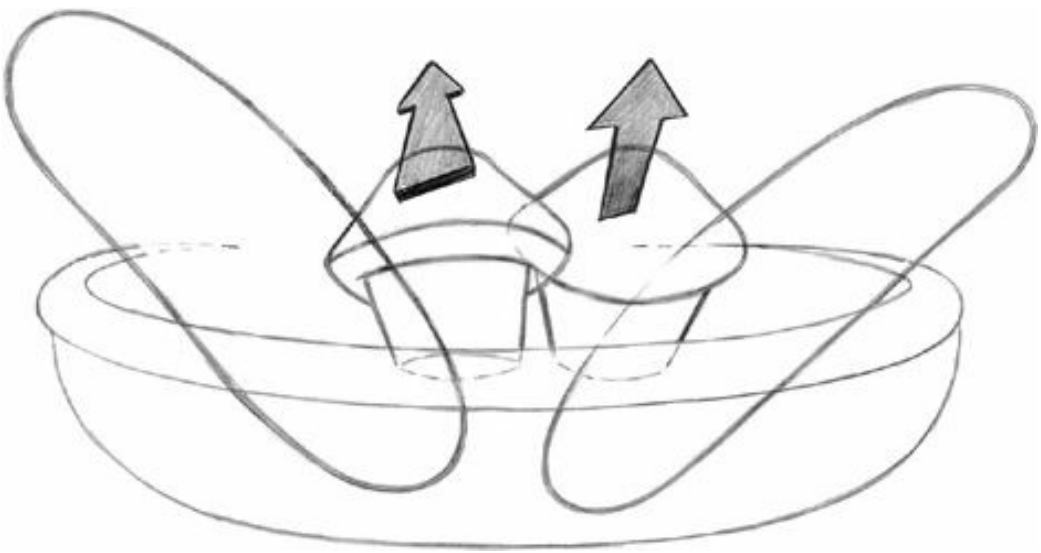
Begin with the basket. It will serve as the frame for all the other elements.



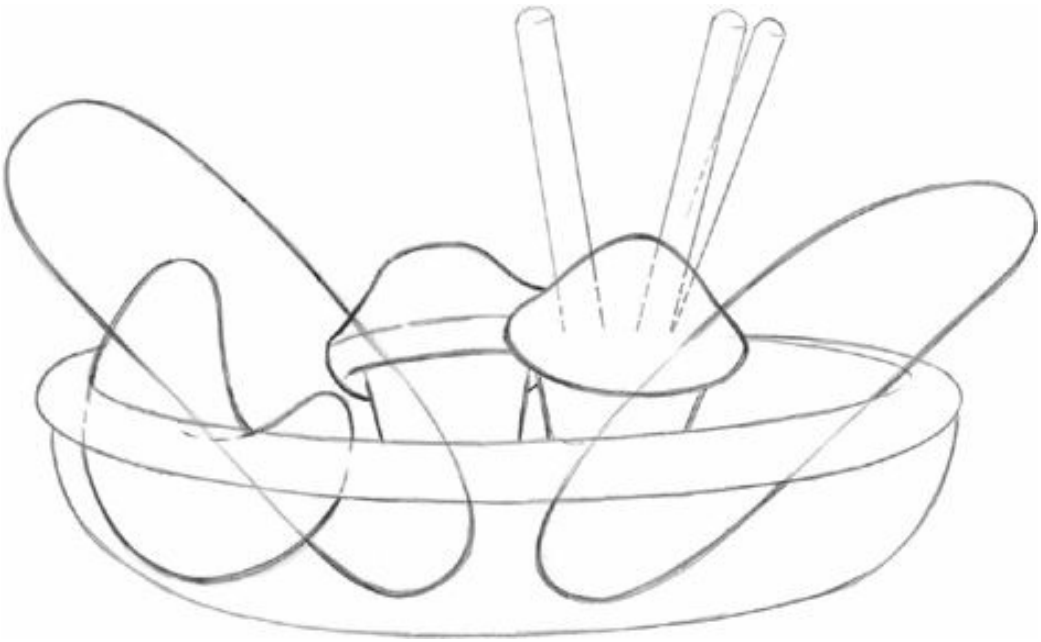
We'll start the composition symmetrically, using the two large loaves as bookends. Tilting them outward will make room for the rest of the items that will fill the bowl.



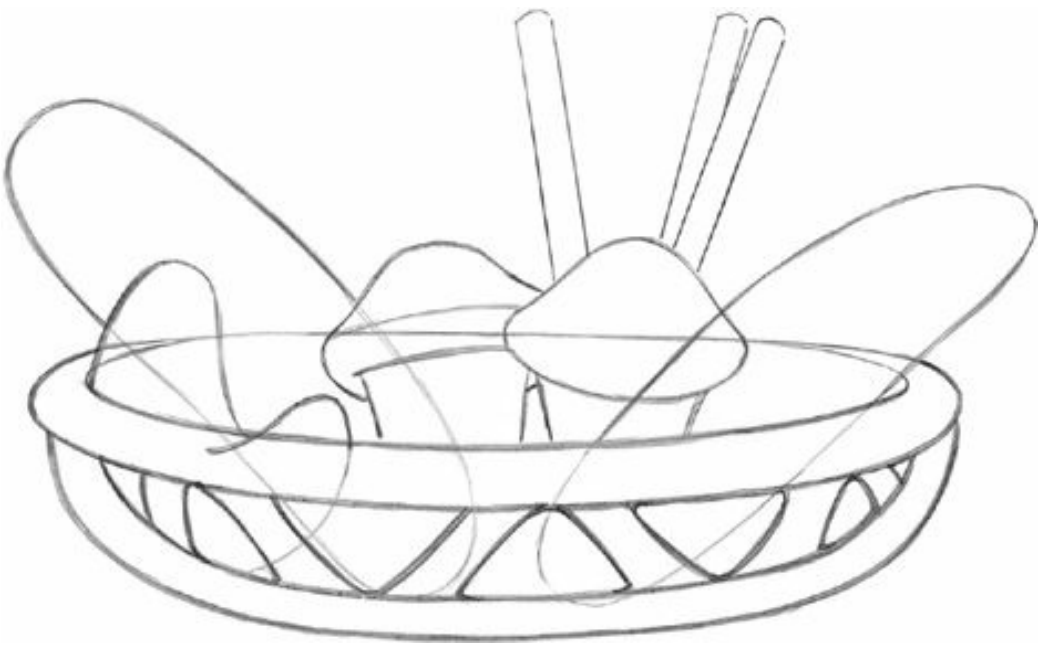
To add a feeling of "fullness" to the objects in the basket, place the muffin up high, as if the basket were overflowing with goodies.



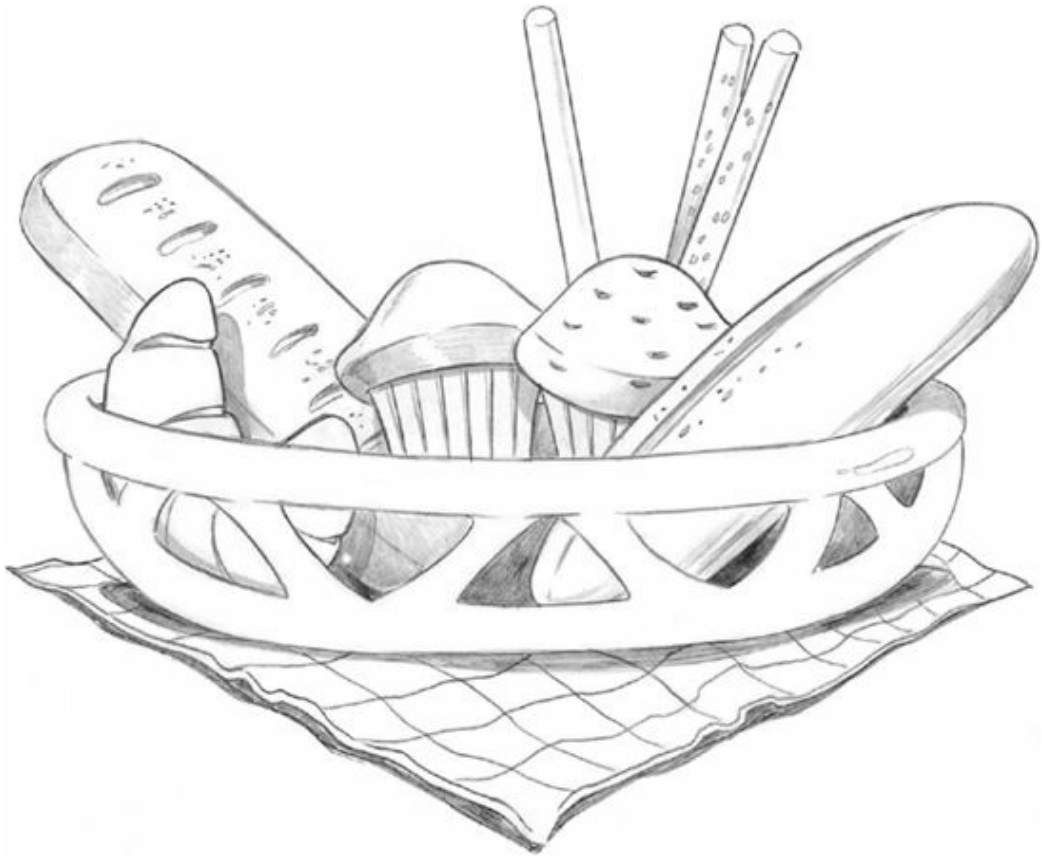
Place the second muffin in front of the first to create depth. This muffin will tilt toward us, while the first tilts away, creating a dynamic push and pull.



Note how the croissant and the breadsticks, placed on opposite sides of the basket, balance each other. The breadsticks are purposely stacked unevenly, to break up the symmetry, rather than all bunched together.



The bold pencil lines indicate the woven design of the basket, which is in the foreground.



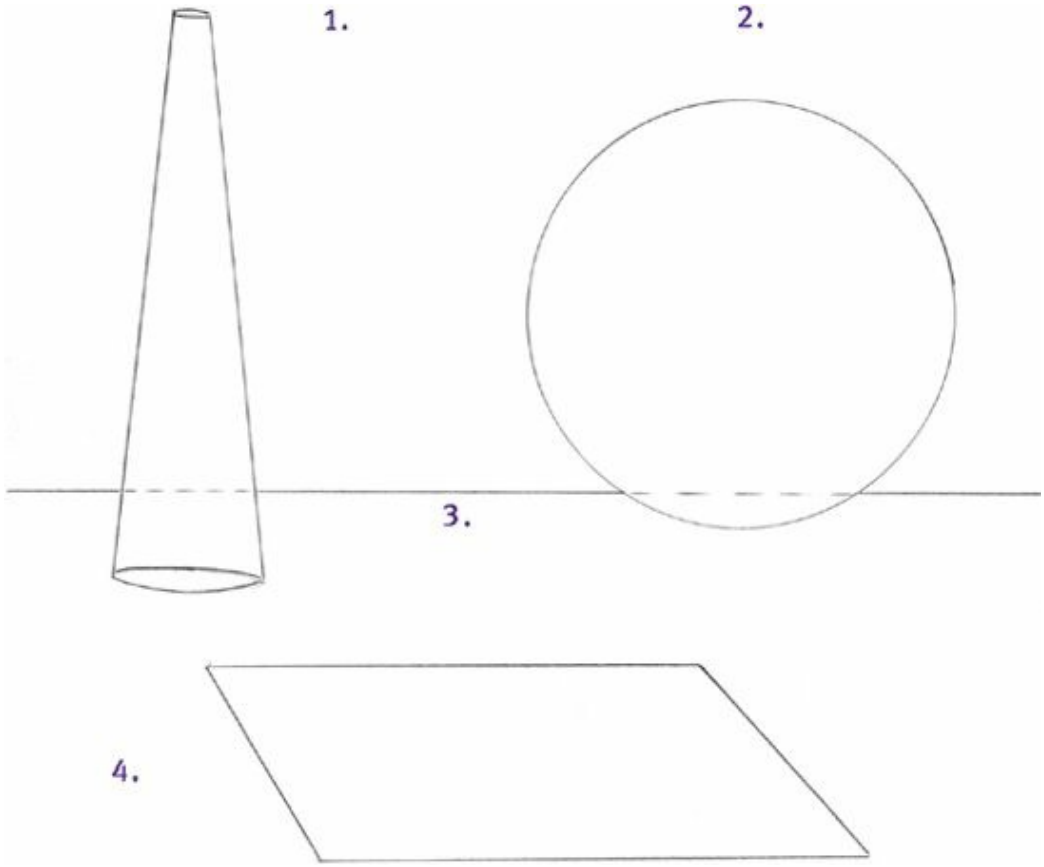
This final step adds a variety of different textures to the surfaces of the breads and muffins. I've shaded the bottom of the basket darkly to further add to the illusion of fullness. Crinkle up the napkin underneath the bowl to keep it from looking like a sheet of graph paper.

Objects from Study

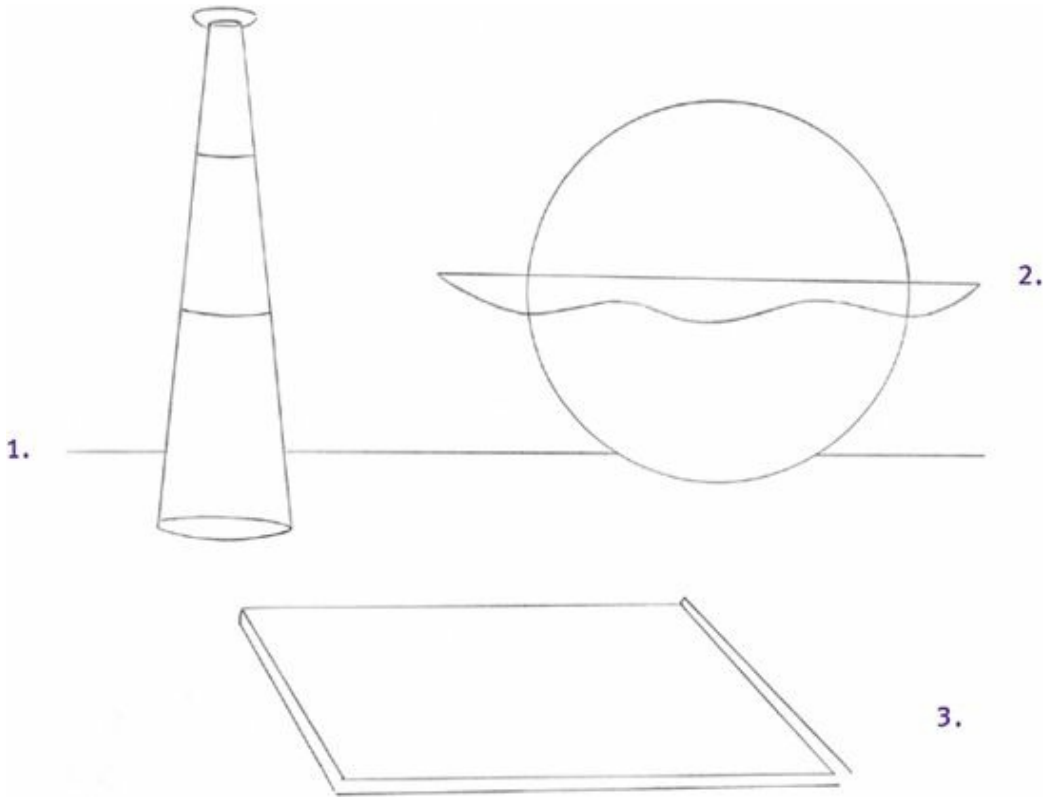
Strategically arranging objects that share a common theme is another popular method for creating a still life. In this approach, the arrangement often appears studied, even conspicuous. It's all part of a rich atmosphere in a controlled setting.

This theme involves three classical fields of study in the Renaissance: anatomy, world exploration, and astronomy. Each field

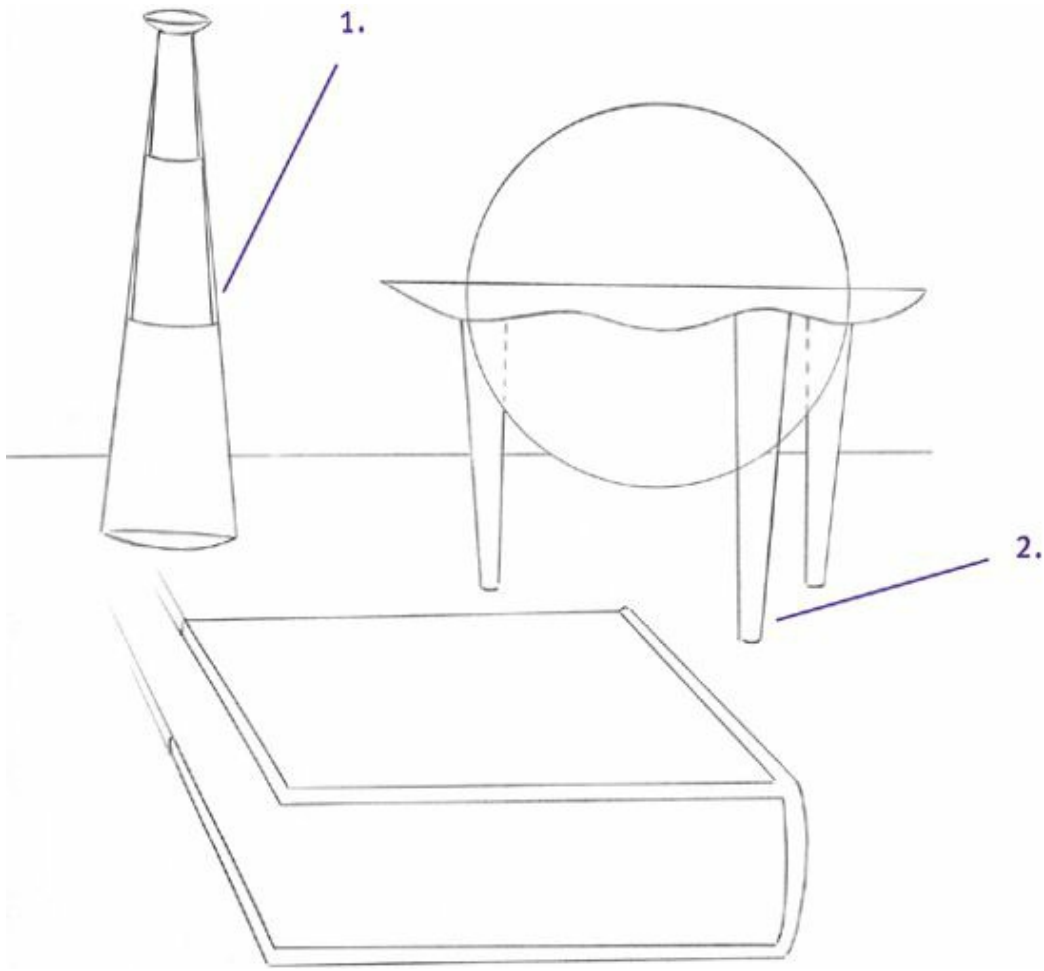
is represented by a relevant icon that evokes a past refined and dignified era.



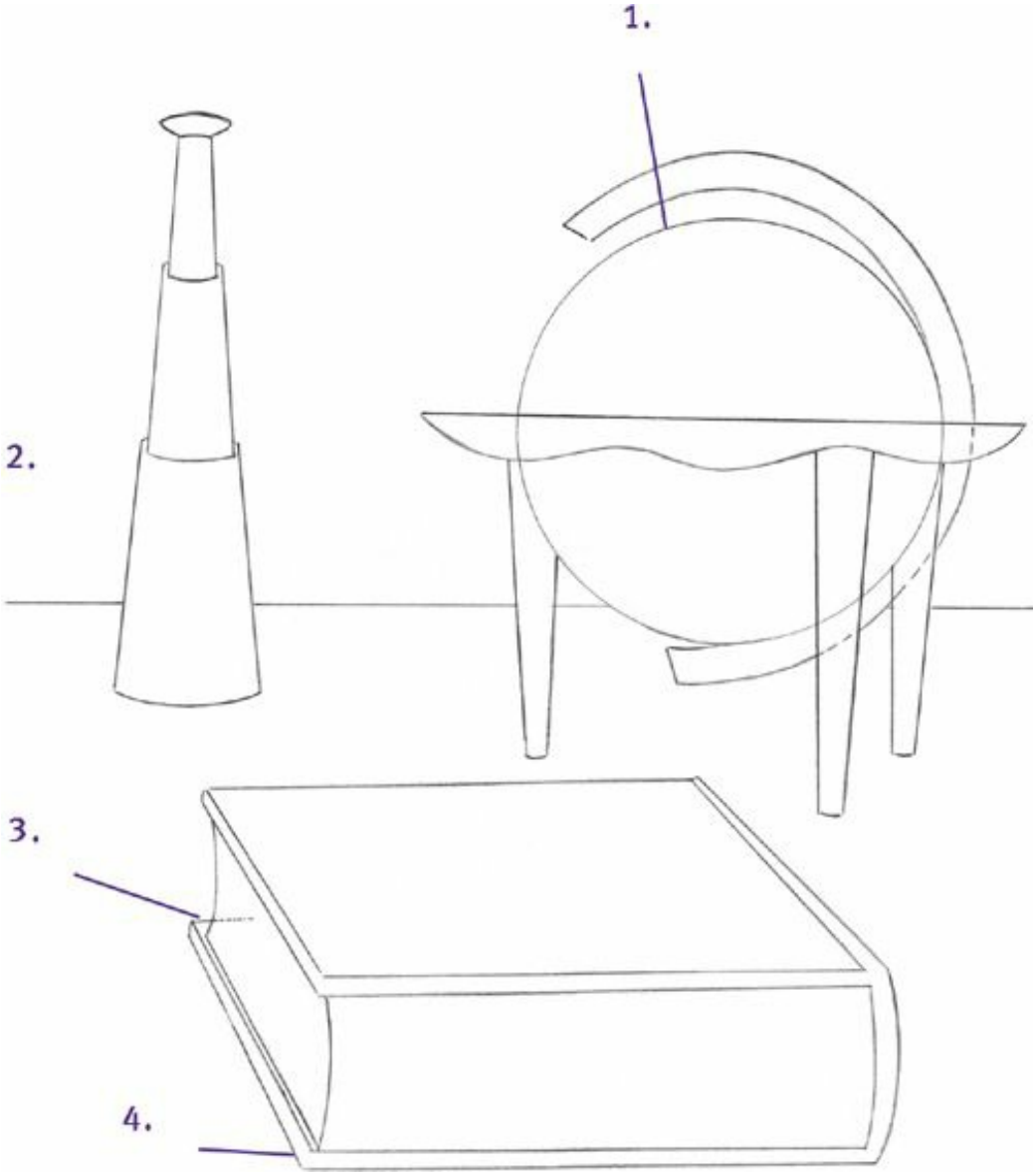
1. Telescope, based on the shape of a cone.
2. Globe is an obvious sphere.
3. Don't forget the horizon line, or the objects will all appear to be floating.
4. Book is based on a rectangle, drawn in perspective.



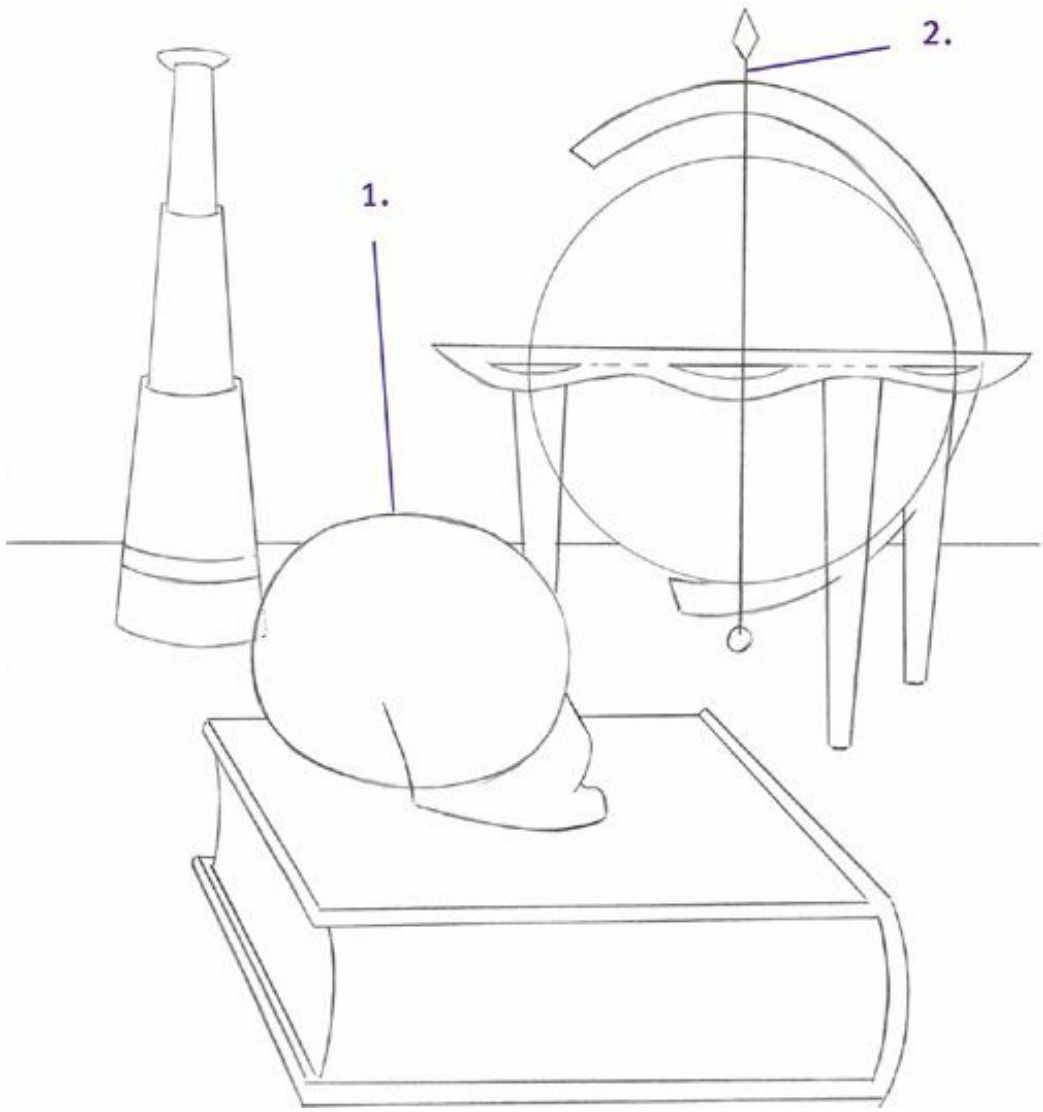
1. Bottom of telescope is a sliver of an oval.
2. Add the globe's platform.
3. Indicate the thickness of the book's top cover by adding a second line.



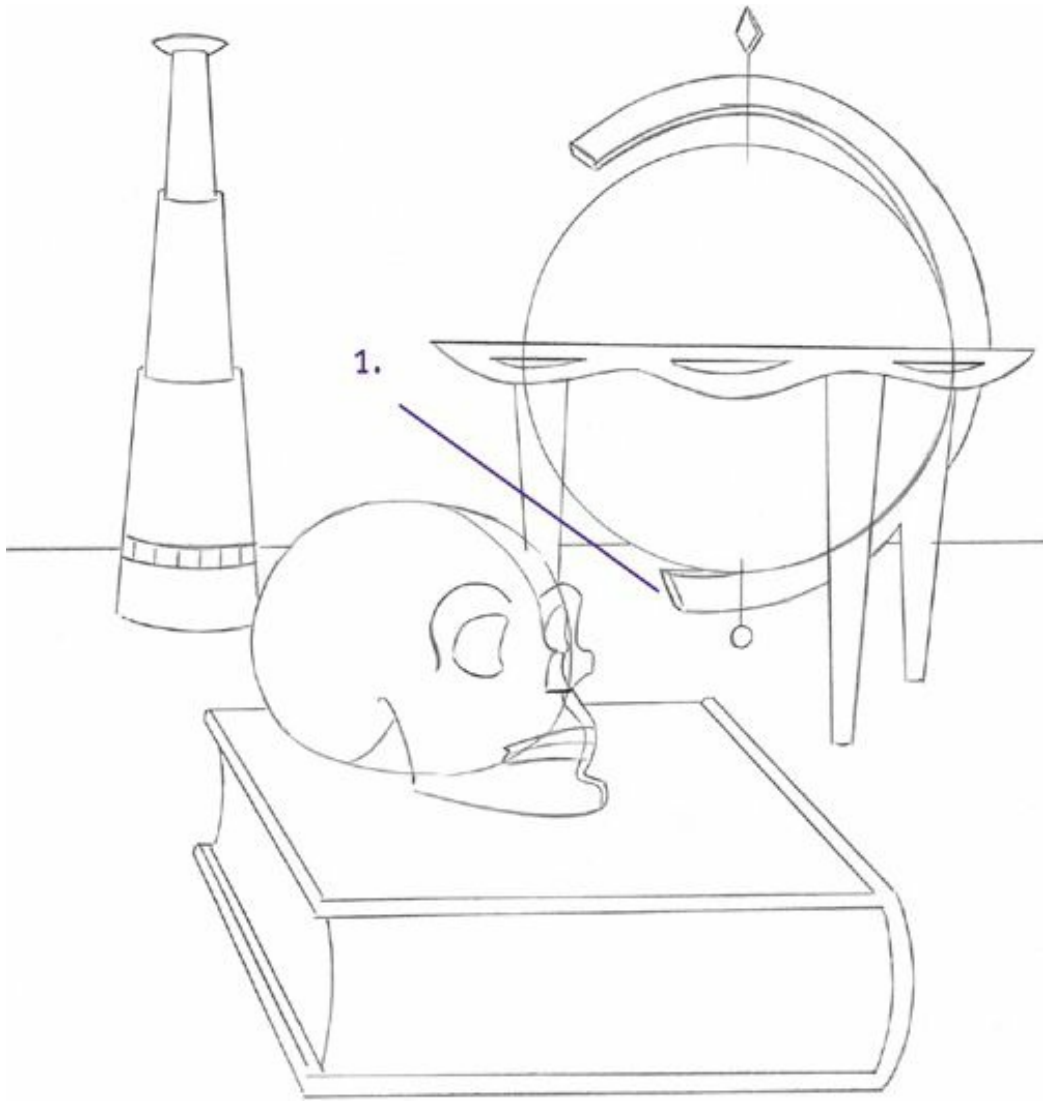
1. Make a small adjustment to the width of the individual sections of the telescope, so that the smaller sections wedge into the larger section.
2. Add the legs of the globe's stand. The front leg is farther down on the page than the other two rear legs, creating perspective.



1. Leave some breathing room between the arc and the globe. On the bottom, however, the globe appears to overlap the arc.
2. Each rounded section appears to wrap around the tube.
3. Add this small but important line, which indicates the interior of the back cover.
4. The edges of the book cover are widest at the bottom of the page and get thinner as they travel back into the distance.

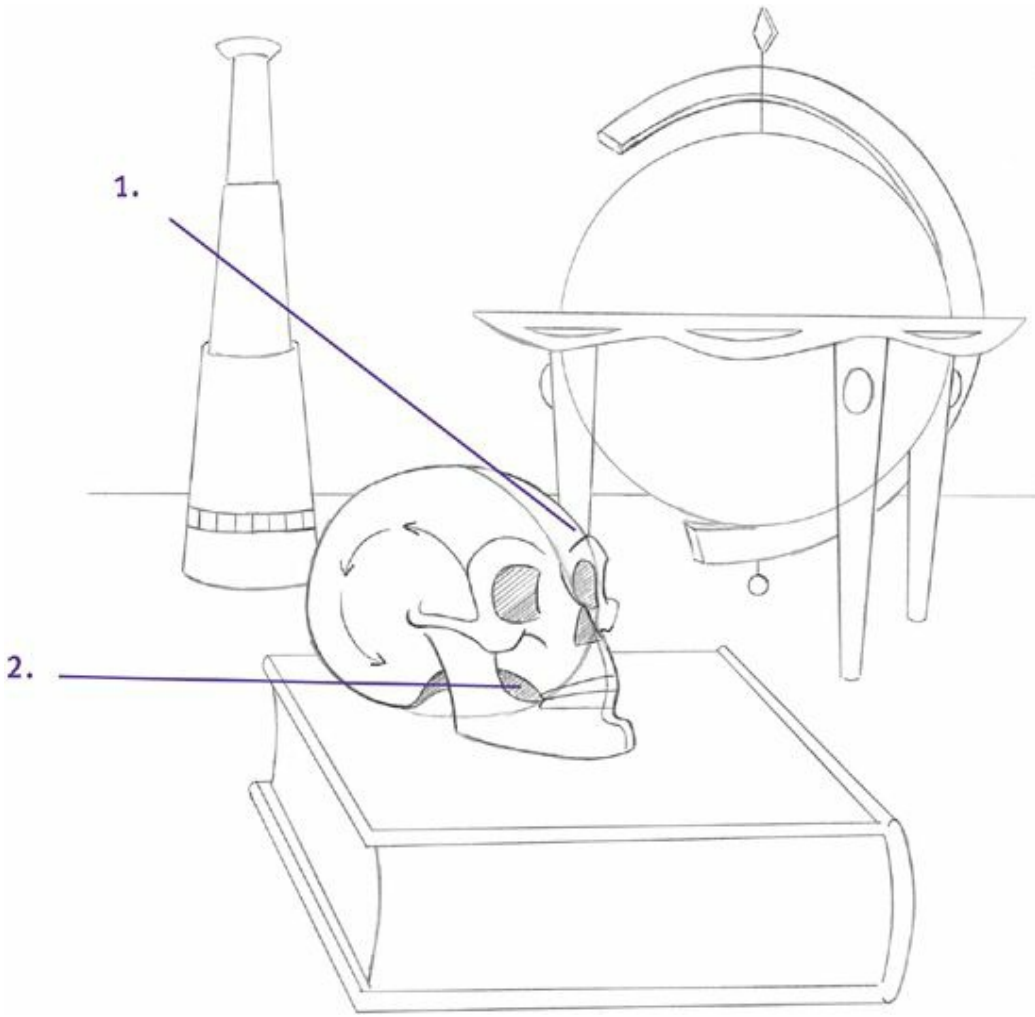


1. The basic outline of the skull is based on an oval and a separate jaw section.
2. Draw a vertical line, on which the globe is attached.

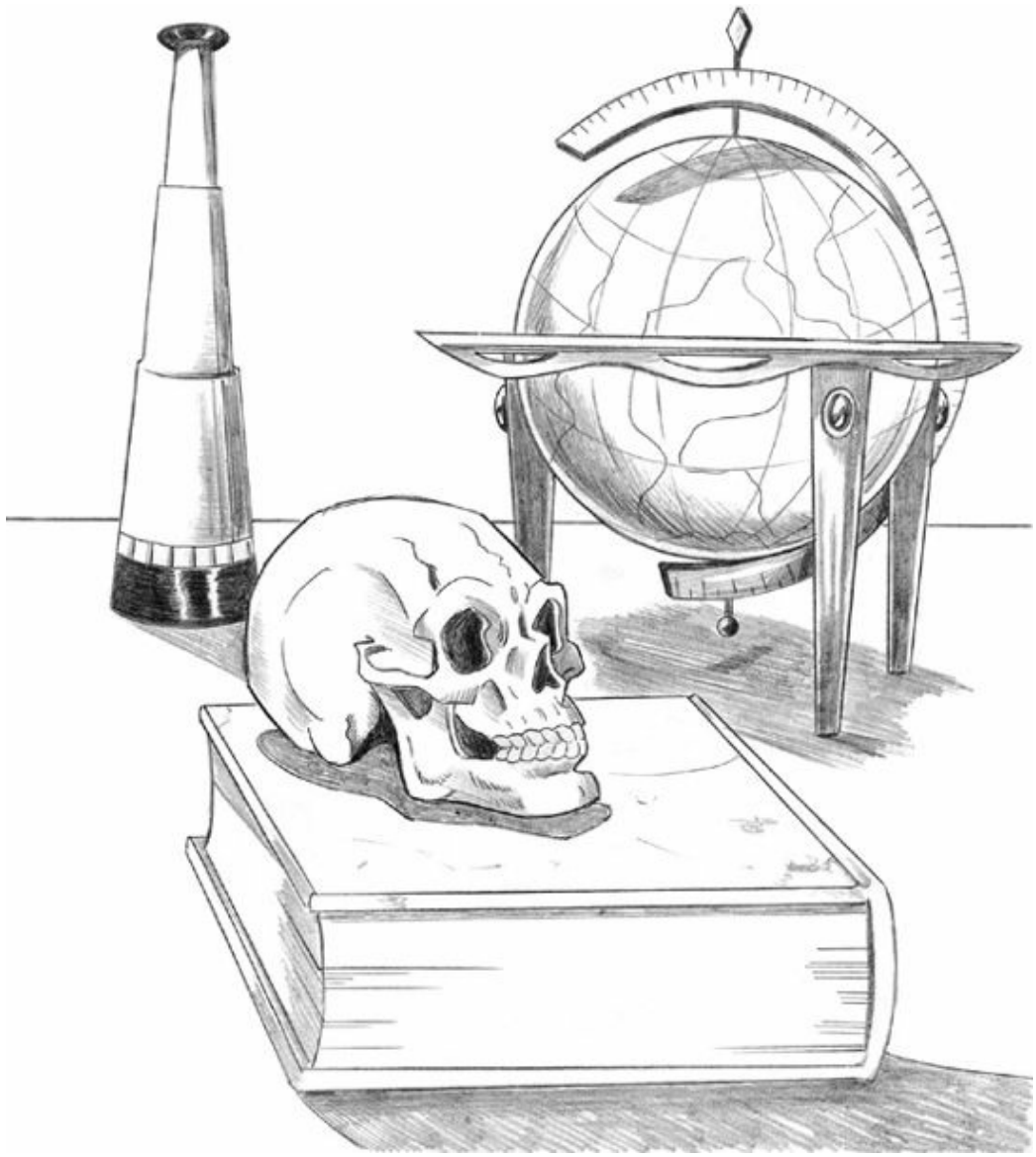


1. Indicate dimension to the arc.

It helps to draw a center line down the middle of the skull as a guide to keep the elements of the head in alignment, such as the bridge of the nose.



1. The brow and cheekbone, on the far side of the skull, protrude past the oval outline.
2. Further refine the skull, concentrating on defining the pockets of space and the contours.

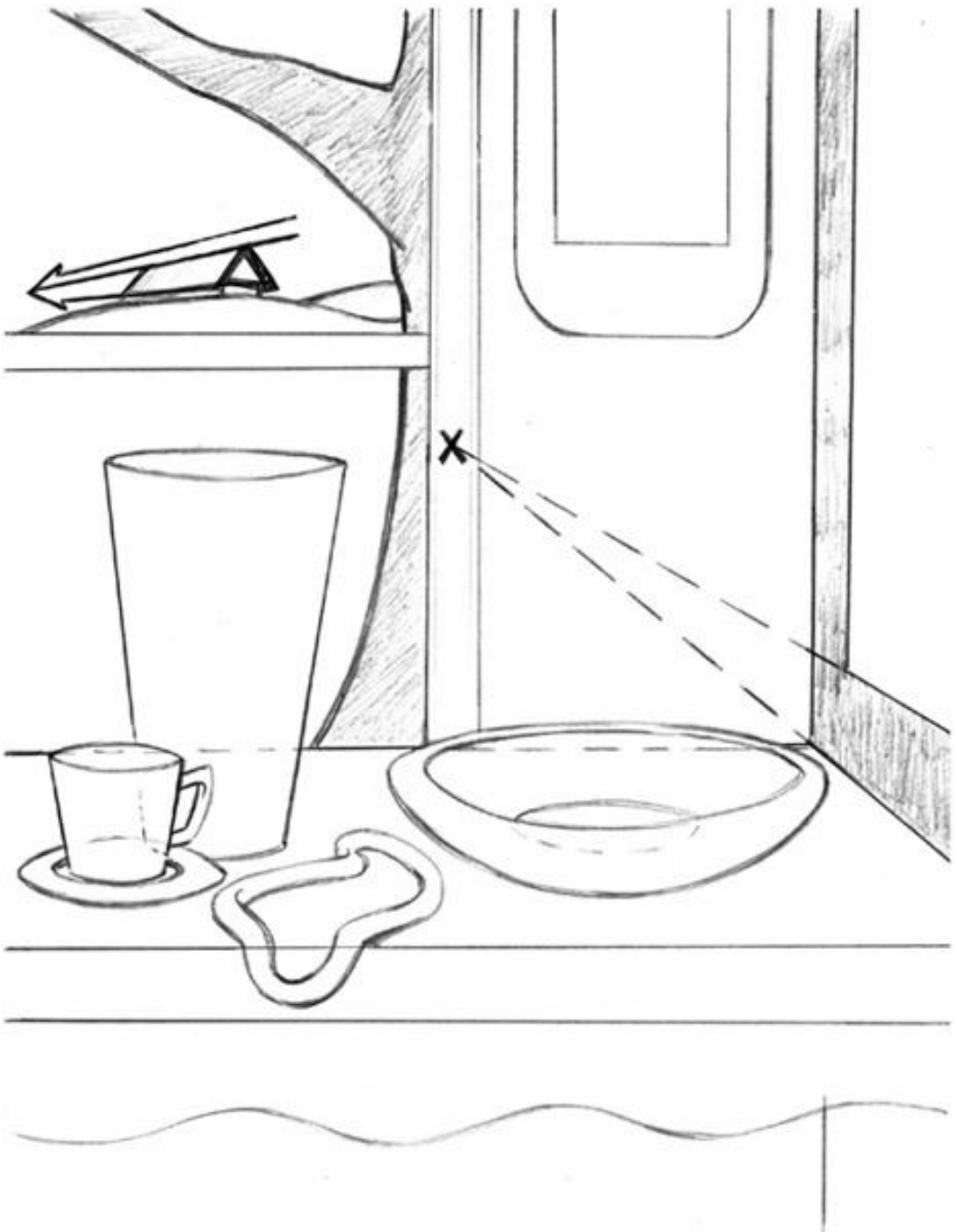


The addition of a few shadows creates the impression of solidity, while adding ornate details provides a feeling of culture and antiquity.

PRACTICE: Indoor/Outdoor Still Life

You can add depth and expanse to a still life by using the outdoors as a backdrop. A view through the window opens up the scene. The picture is drawn in one-point perspective, as indicated by the X on the diagram. Note how the vanishing lines of the table and the painting converge at the center of the picture. This center spot is also where you could draw the horizon line (a horizontal guideline that goes across the page from left to right). But with so few objects using vanishing lines, the perspective middle is all we really need to indicate. Why clutter up the drawing with a lot of guidelines if you don't have to?

You might be wondering why the horizon line is at the X and not where the sky meets the hill. That's because the hill is elevated and, therefore, above the horizon. Additionally, you can see that a corner of the house faces toward you. As mentioned earlier, this means it's drawn in two-point perspective. Its vanishing lines travel downward, toward the level of the "X."



Simple Composition Hints

Instead of just tossing the various elements together, you should organize them using a few basic principles of composition. These techniques keep the picture from appearing cluttered and give it a visual rhythm. Here are some things to note and use in your artwork:

TANGENTS

Basically, tangents are points where one object touches another. In drawings, you mostly want to avoid creating these spots, because they look awkward. Notice how the far edge of the bowl rises slightly above the horizontal line of the table rather than stopping precisely on the line. Likewise, the top of the cup. And to avoid another tangent, the roof of the house doesn't touch the line of the hill but stops just short of it.

OVERLAP

Overlapping conveys the feeling of depth. Note how the string of pearls looks real. That's due to its being overlapped. The cup and vase are also overlapped, as is the house by the hill.

DIAGONALS

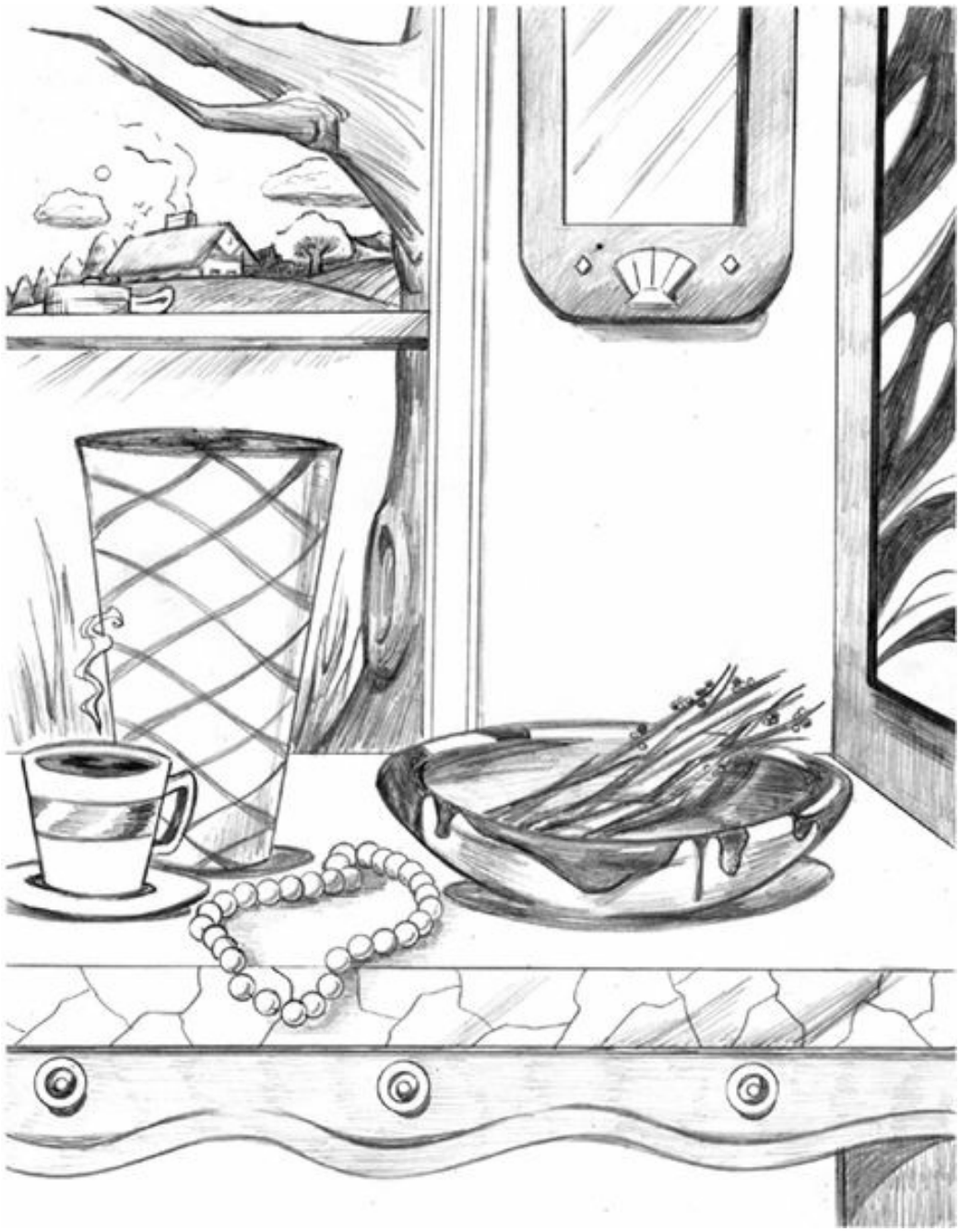
This is a very symmetrical scene, which gives it a feeling of stateliness; however, you can infuse an understated dynamic with energy by applying diagonals. The hill, house, and tree all use diagonals and, therefore, add energy to the scene.

PACING AND GROUPING

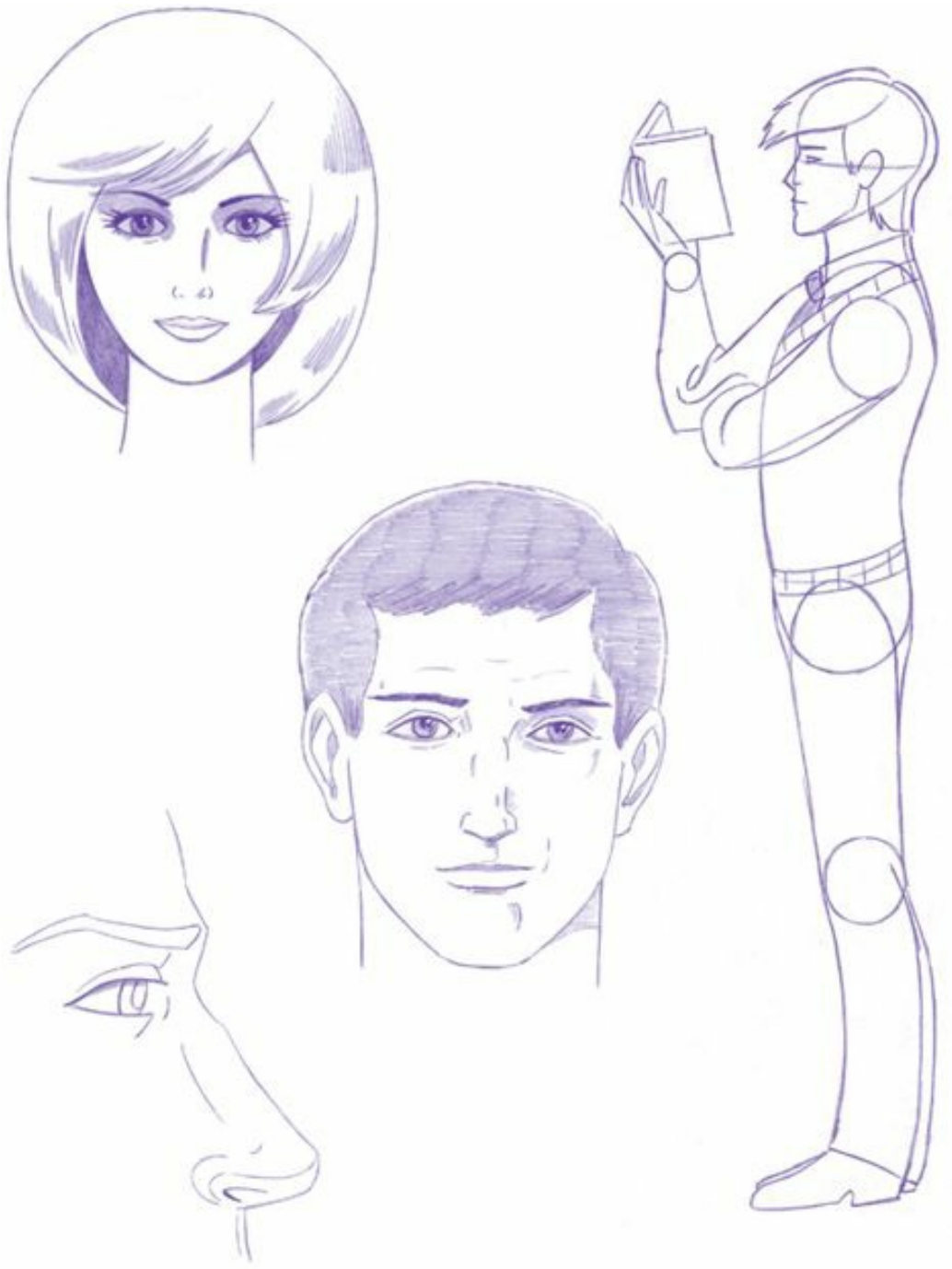
Instead of everything being spaced evenly apart, the objects appear randomly placed, which is more interesting. The vase and cup are grouped together, the bowl is solitary and placed toward the rear, and the pearls are placed toward the front in a casual manner.

SHADOW

Note that the right wall, which is drawn at an angle, is shaded. This differentiates it from the adjoining wall and gives the appearance of depth.



Drawing the Human Figure



All artists need to know how to draw people. Life drawing is considered one of the foundations for all art, and has been for

centuries. Rather than focus on the minute details of the human anatomy, we'll focus on overarching concepts such as the correct placement of features, basic body construction, foreshortening, and balance. Combined with your already substantial knowledge of perspective, line flow, and harmonious composition, these skills will allow you to draw the human figure with confidence. Our gradually progressive steps are designed to help you succeed in this important section, too.

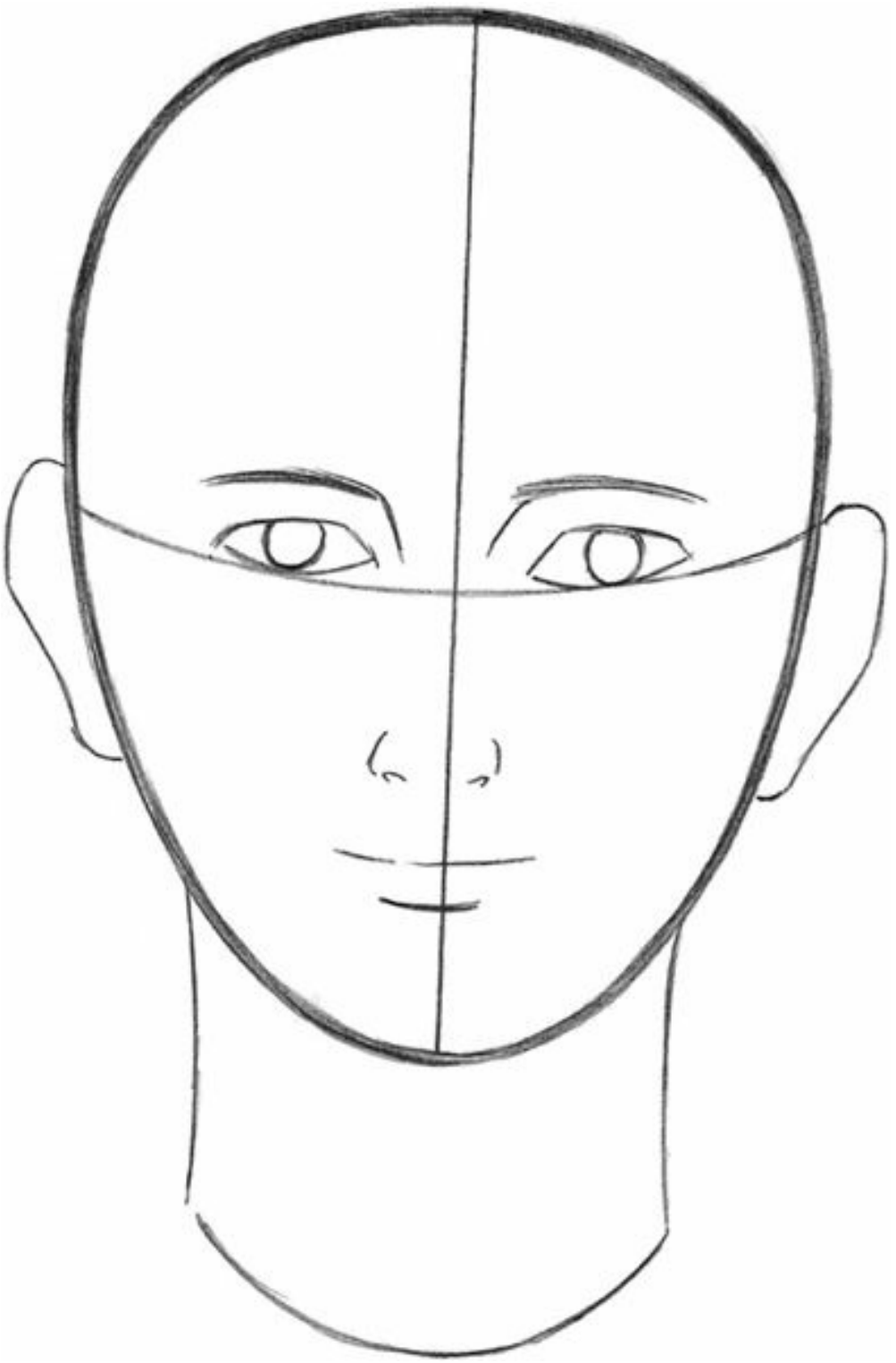
THE HEAD

Now that we've covered the essentials of drawing the features, we'll create the framework in which to put them. The foundation shape of the human head is a simple egg, turned so that the wide end is on top and the narrower end is on the bottom.

We can see immediately that the forehead takes up a good deal of space. This fact is often concealed by the hairline. For artists, it is important to become familiar with the head's true proportions and not allow details such as hair to alter the underlying structure.

Front View

In the front view, it's very important to line up all the features symmetrically, which means placing them on an even level so that the face doesn't appear lopsided. The eyes are on an even level; so are the ears and nostrils. The mouth is centered, unless an expression tugs it to one side. Use the vertical center line and the horizontal eye line as guideposts.

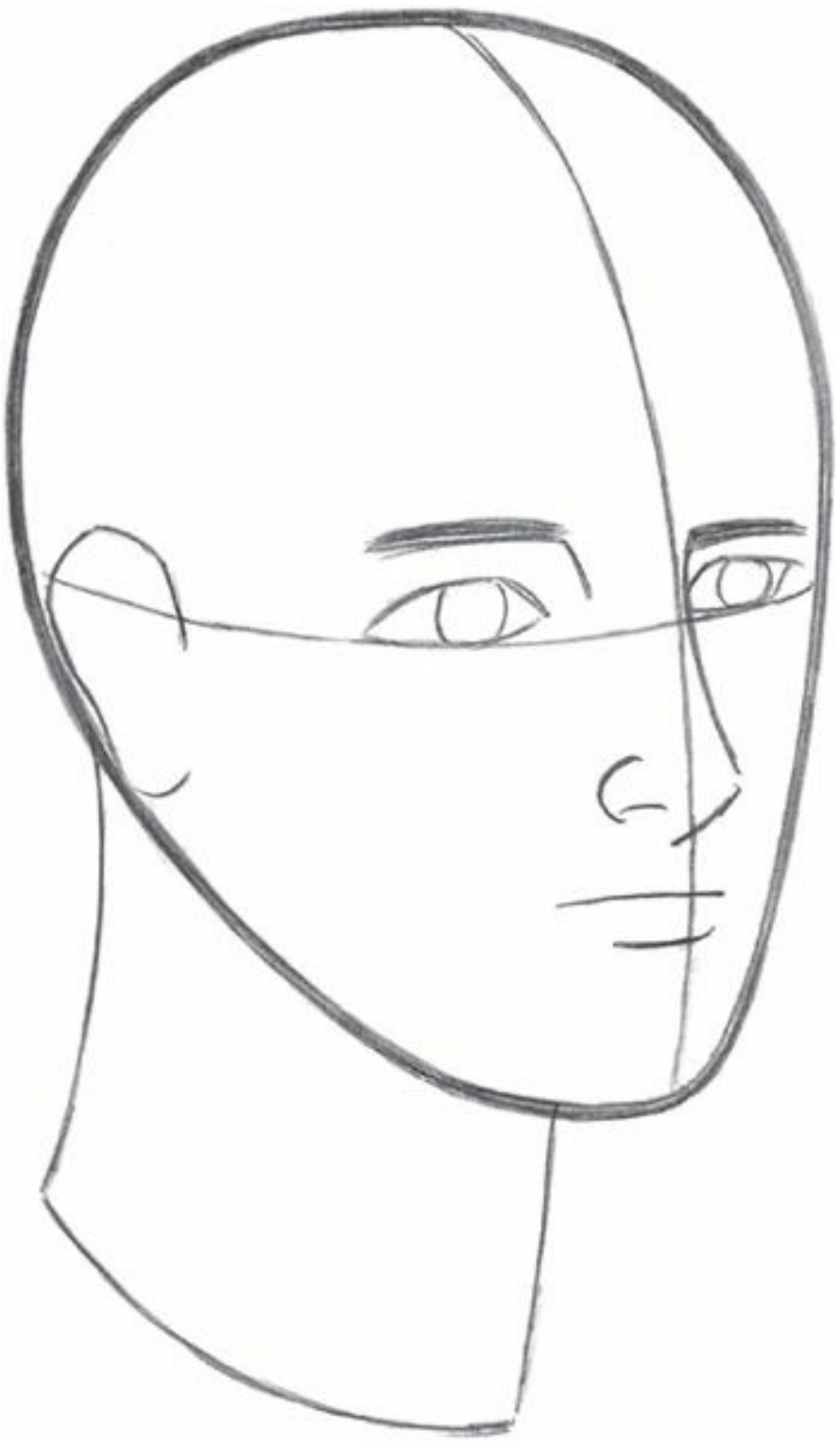


3/4 View

When the head is in a 3/4 view, the center line runs down the face in a curve. This occurs because the face plate is round, not flat.

The bridge of the nose goes at the intersection where the vertical and horizontal guidelines cross.

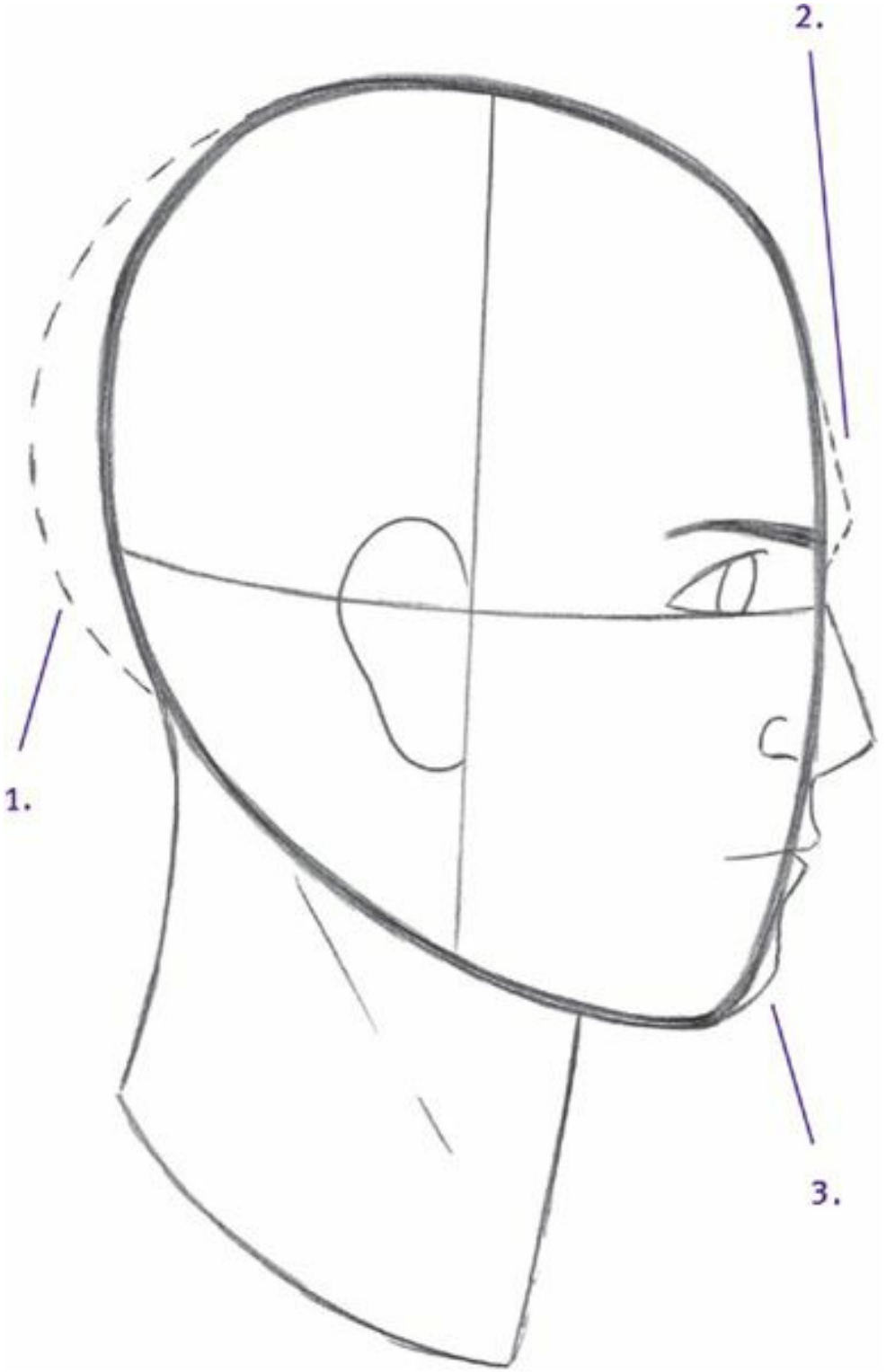
Due to perspective, more of the mouth appears on the near side of the center line than on the far side of it.



Side View

To make the anatomy appear correct, we add some mass to the back of the egg-shaped head, building out the skull. We also build out the brow and chin. In fact, the entire front of the face needs to be modeled including the nose, lips, and chin.

The ear appears approximately halfway across the head. (Most beginners assume the ear goes much farther back.)


2.
1.
3.

1. Add mass.
2. Add mass.
3. Add mass.

THE FEATURES OF THE FACE

The importance of facial features can't be overemphasized when learning to draw people, but many books that focus on drawing the human figure pay scant attention to them. This presents a problem for the beginning artist, who has little chance of having an enjoyable experience drawing the rest of the figure if he or she gets frustrated when it comes to the face.

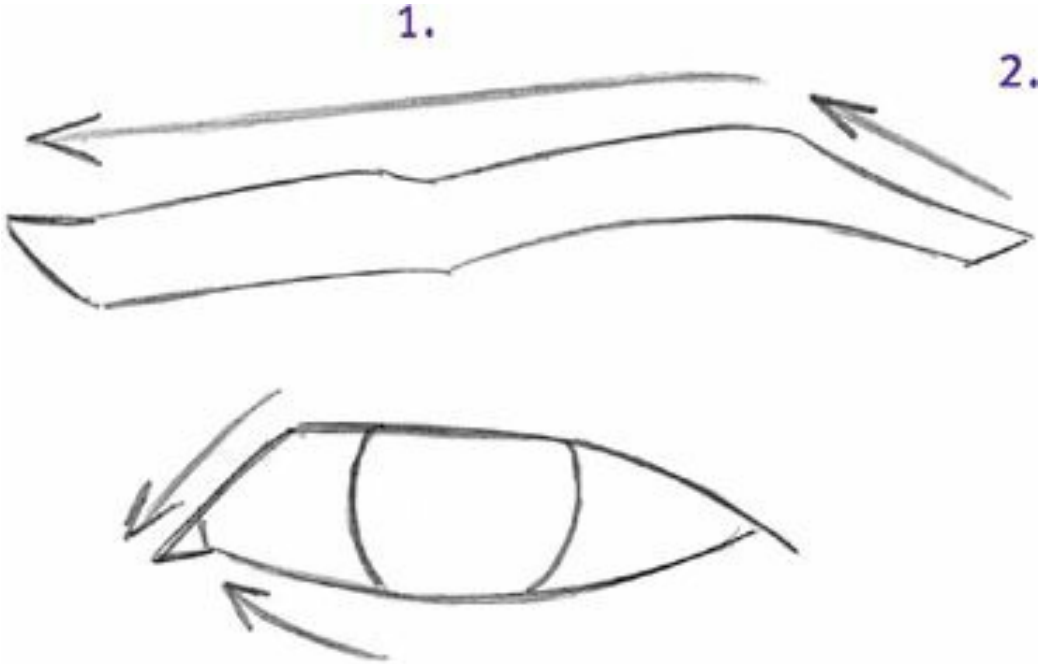
The following examples are idealized versions of a variety of male and female features. They are good examples from which to learn the principles. Adjust them as you desire to create an individual look.

EYES

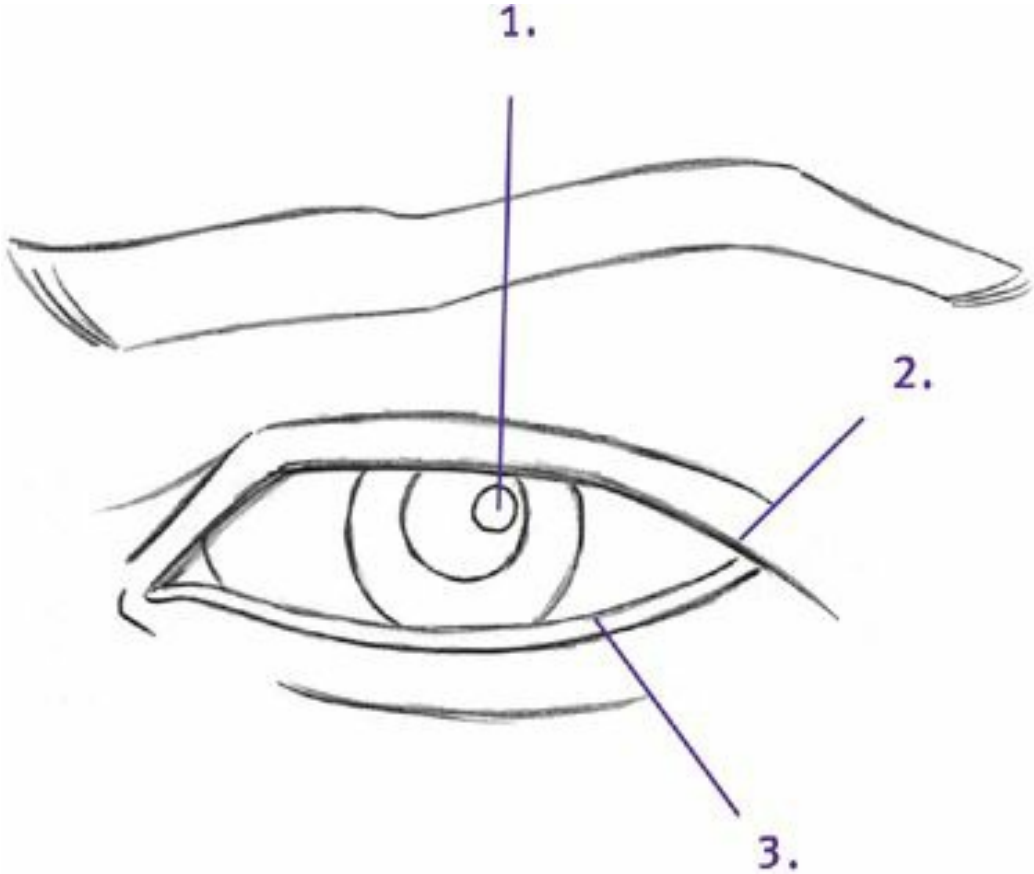
Front View — Male

The male eyebrow typically doesn't have a pronounced arch like the female's but is rather straight. It also slopes down toward the bridge of the nose.

Note that the upper eyelid is not a mirror image of the lower eyelid. Each line follows a different path around the curve of the eye.



1. Male eyebrow is thick and straight.
2. Angle



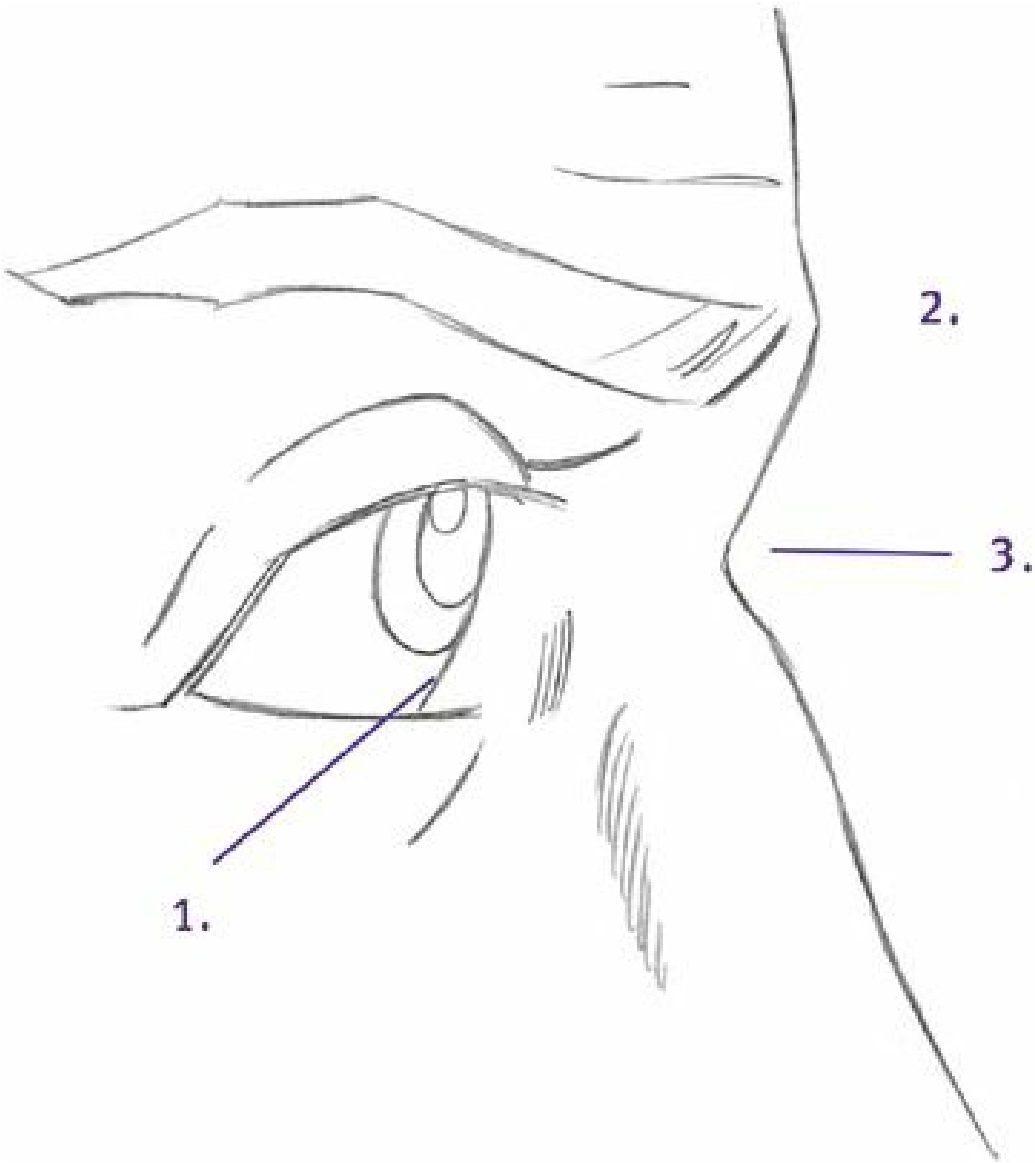
1. The shine in the eye is always off to one side. If you place it dead center, it will appear that the person is looking into oncoming headlights.
2. Always draw the upper eyelid with a bolder, darker line than the lower eyelid.
3. Show thickness of lower eyelid when character is close up.

Side View — Male

Many less-experienced artists attempt to draw a “front-view” eye on a “side-view” face, and naturally, it doesn’t work. The eye must be severely shortened, perhaps even more than at first feels natural in the side view.

Correct Side-View Eye. Eye in profile at the correct length.

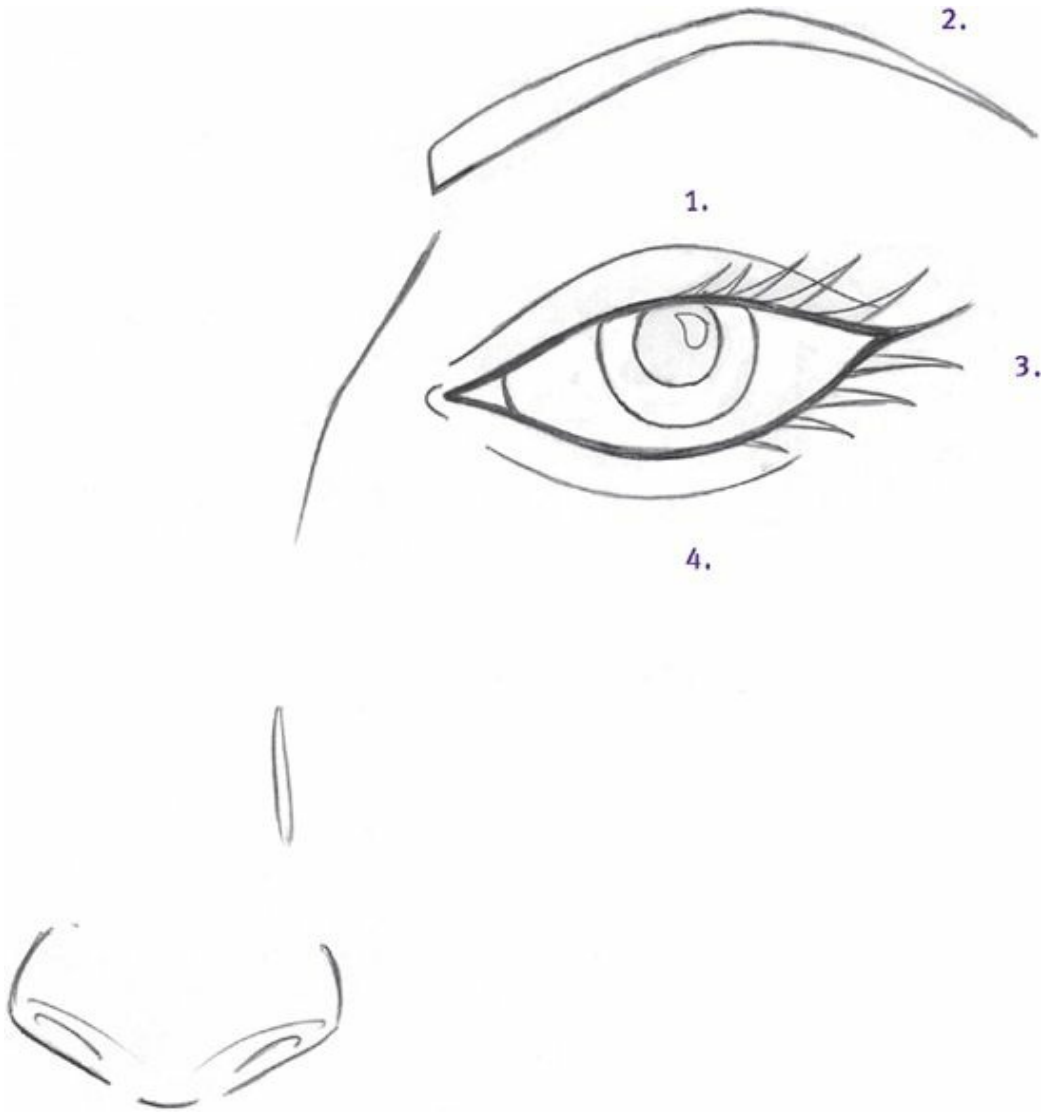
Incorrect Side-View Eye. This is a common mistake—drawing a front-view eye in a profile-view face. It's easy to see that the eye is too long.



1. In profile, the front of the eye is round, not flat.
2. Eyebrow slopes downward.
3. Indent at the bridge of the nose.

Front View — Female

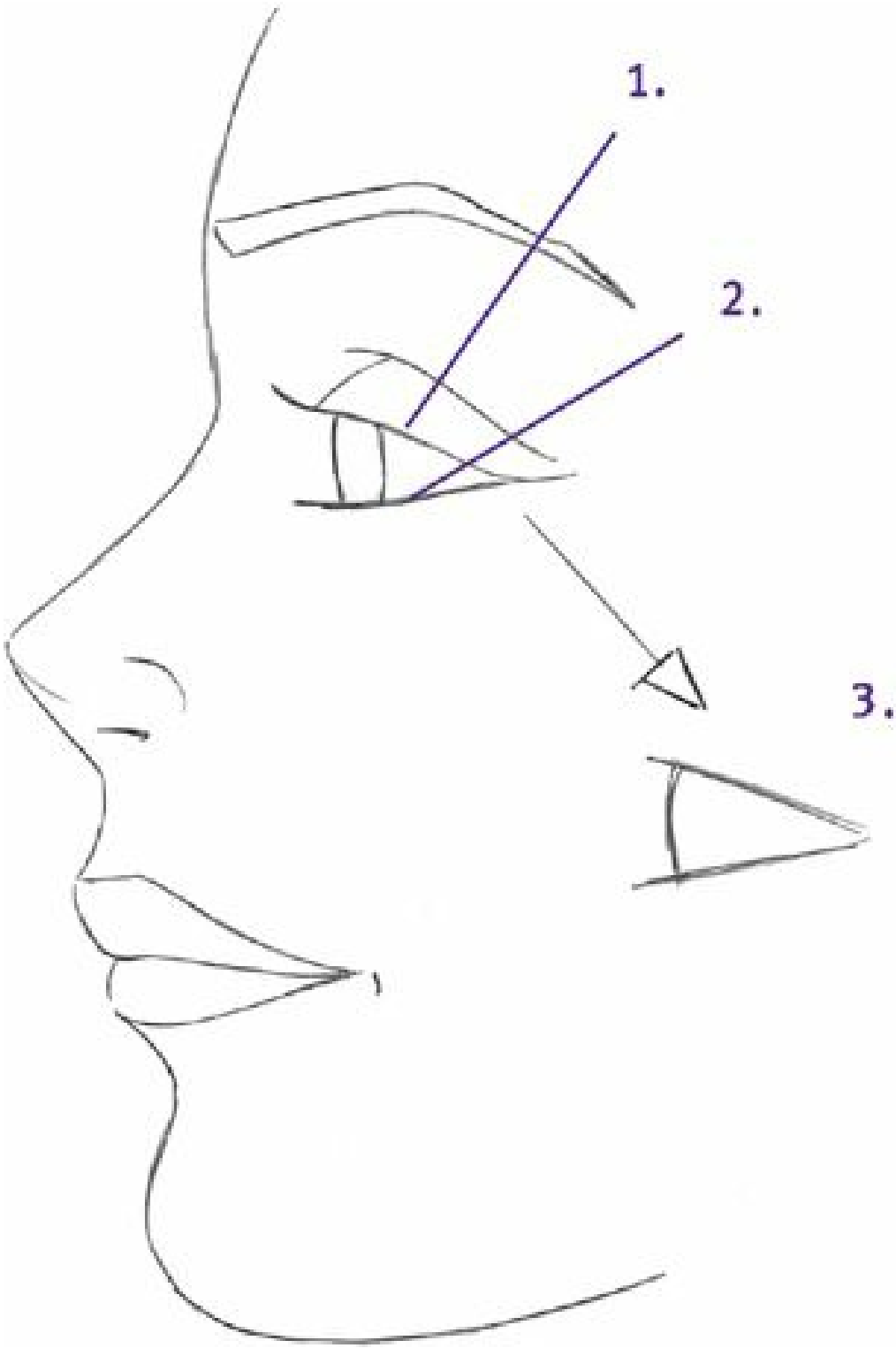
The female's eyes are wide in the middle but narrow at the ends. The eyebrow is narrow and often severely arched high on the forehead. Both the top and bottom eyelids are drawn with dark lines.



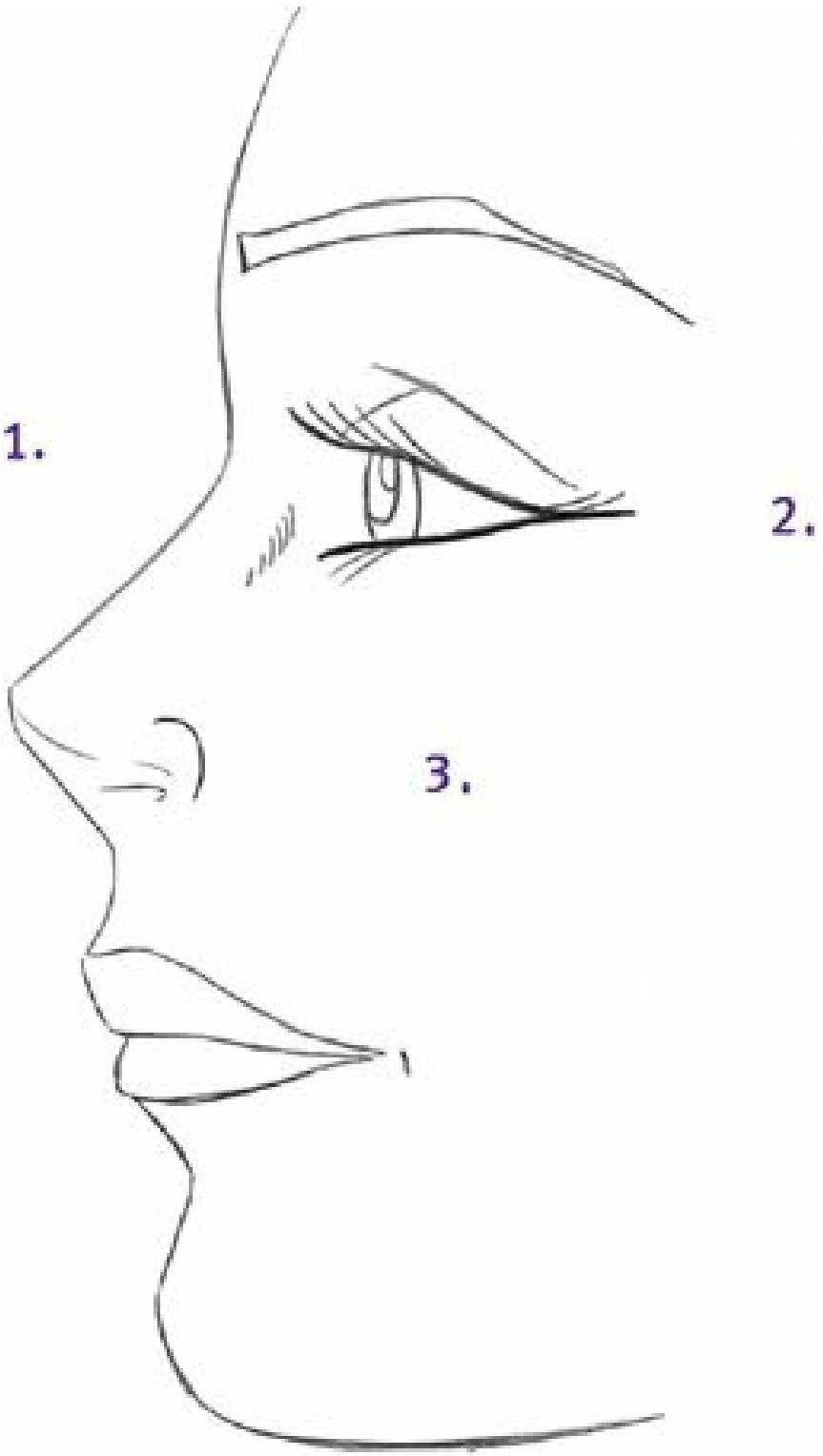
1. Articulate the crease above the eye.
2. Big arch
3. The female eye gets wide in the center.
4. Don’t forget to add a slight lower eye crease.

Side View — Female

The eyelashes protrude in front and extend past the length of the eye. The high arch of the eyebrow is repeated in the side view. The lower eyelid is drawn more horizontally than the upper eyelid, which is drawn at a 45-degree angle.


1.
2.
3.

1. The top eyelid is drawn at a 45-degree angle.
2. Bottom of eyelid is horizontal.
3. Shape of eye looks somewhat like a triangle on its side.


1.
2.
3.

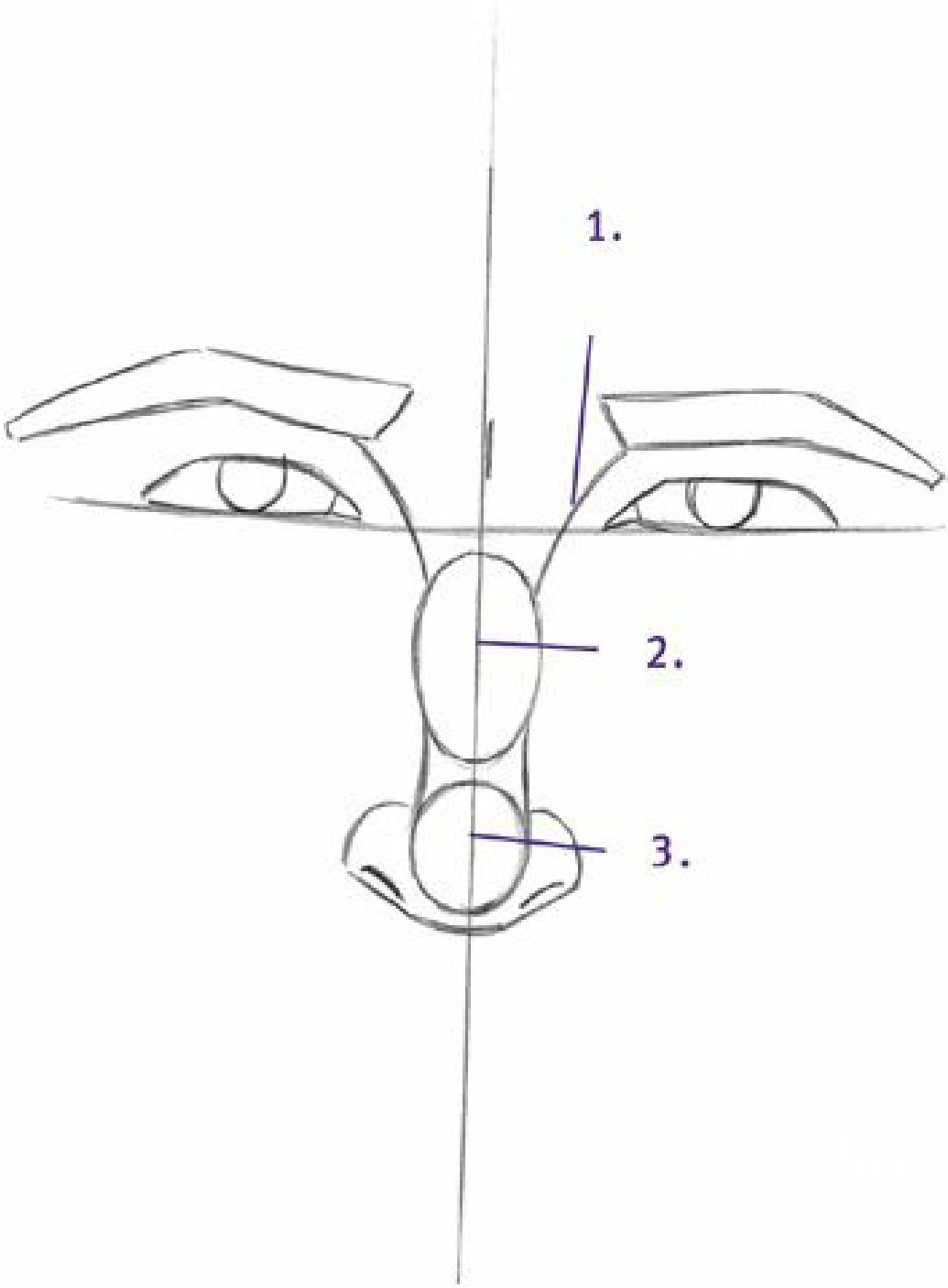
1. Long lashes in front
2. Long lashes in back
3. Short lashes on the bottom and in back

Note the very subtle shadow that falls on the eyeball itself, just below the upper eyelid. Be careful not to be heavy-handed with this, or you'll ruin the effect.

NOSE

Front View — Male

The nose is made up of two distinct sections: the bony part just below the bridge of the nose and the ball of cartilage at the end of the nose. Neither should be heavily defined in your drawings, but they should contribute to the subtle contours of the outline.



1. The bridge of the nose connects to the eyebrows.

2. Bone
3. Cartilage

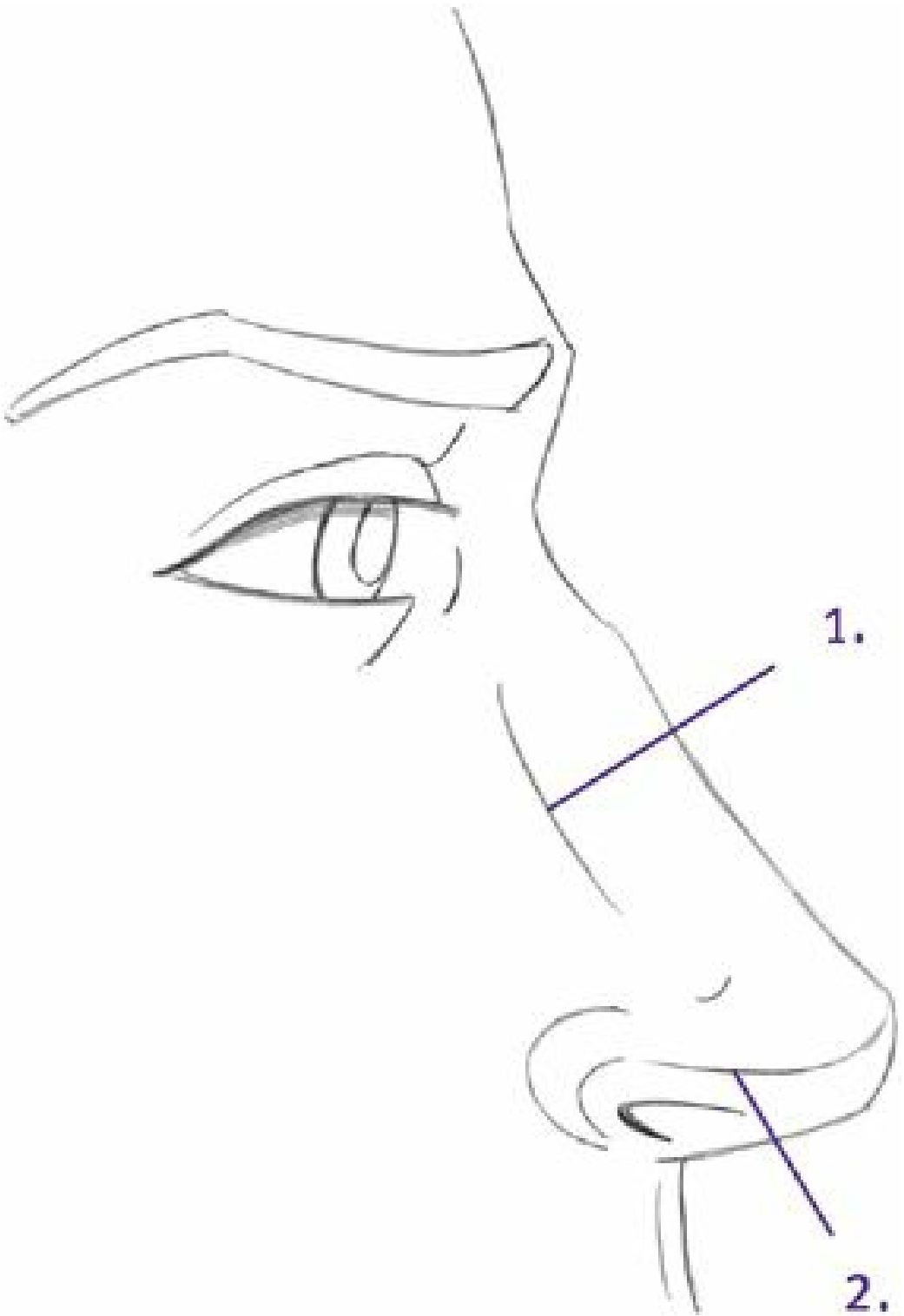
Notice how the surface contours follow the underlying structure of the nose.

The bottom of the nose is usually touched with shadow, as overhead light does not fall there.

Side View — Male

The bridge of the male nose in the side view looks like a mini ski slope. At this angle, the brow of the forehead, just above the eyebrow, protrudes.

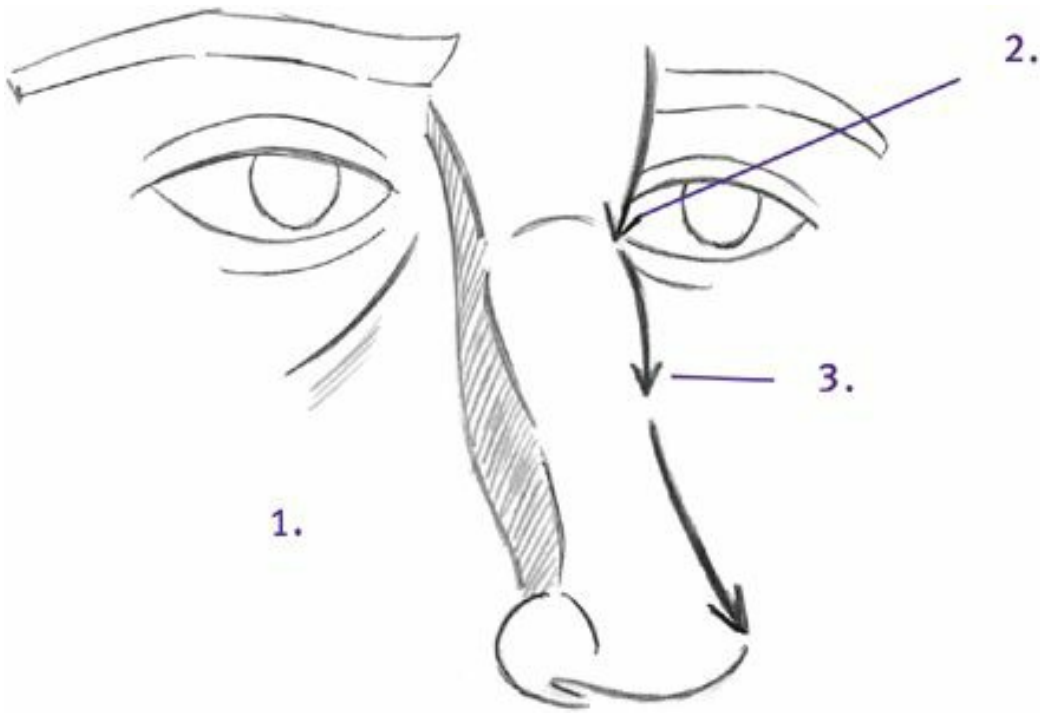
1. Remember to add the bump just under the bridge of the nose.


1.
2.

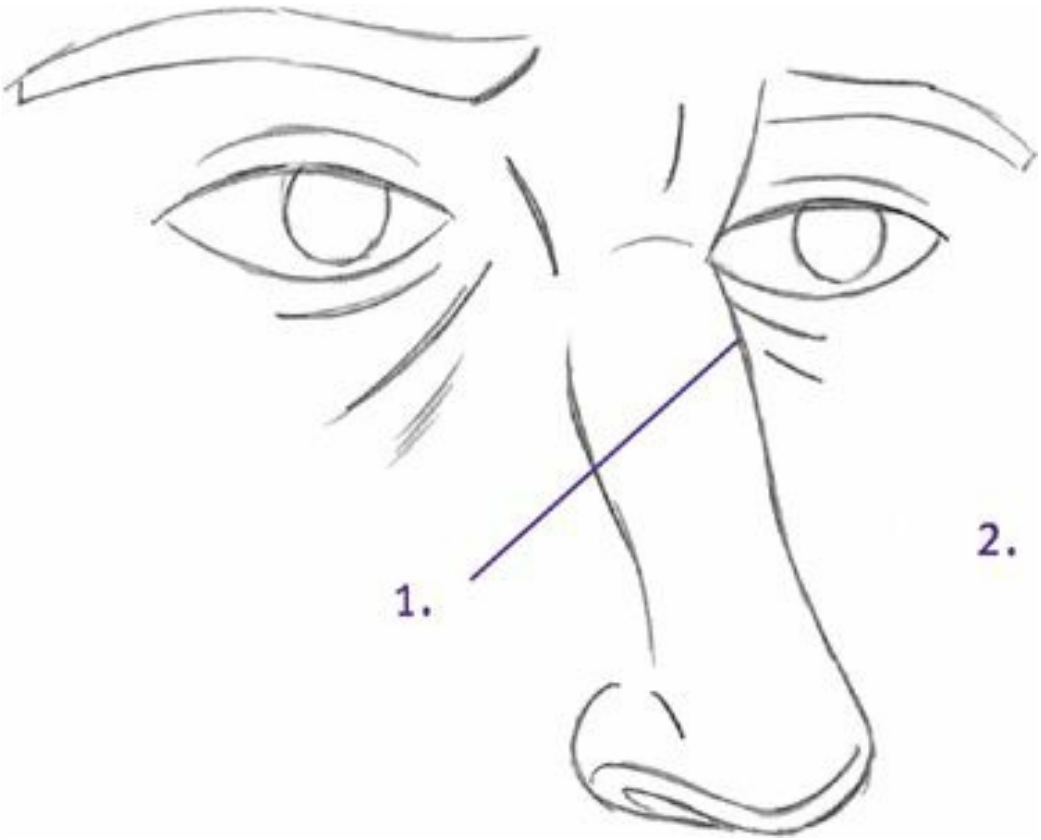
1. Use a light line to suggest the side of the nose.
2. Use a light line to separate the top from the bottom plane of the nose.

3/4 View — Male

The 3/4 view is an entirely different construction for the nose than we've drawn thus far. The placement of the nose in this angle affects the eyes, and they must be adjusted for the new perspective. As the head turns away from the viewer, it causes one eye to appear closer and one eye to appear farther away.



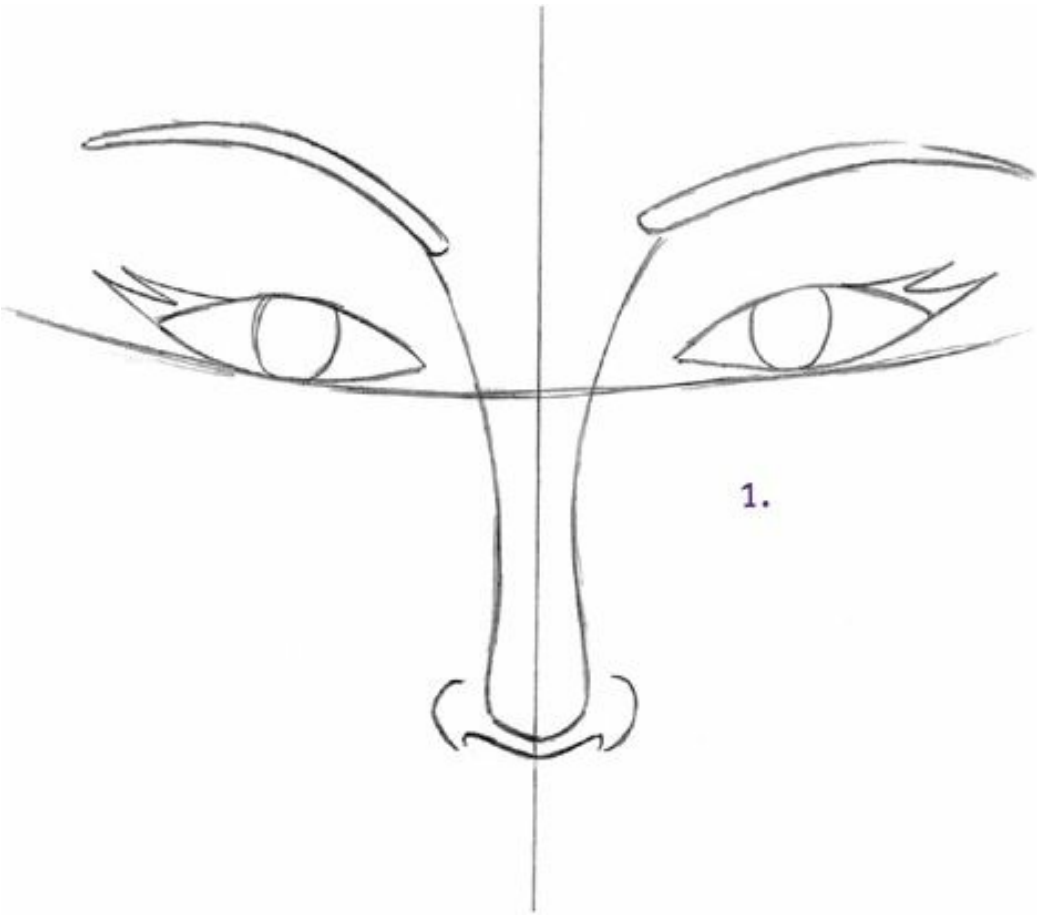
1. In this view, we indicate the near side of the nose by using light shading.
2. Due to the effect of perspective on the head, the far eye should appear to be closer to the bridge of the nose than the near eye, and may even be cut off by it, while the near eye is a comfortable distance from the nose.
3. The contour of the nose follows the three individual arrows, but be sure to blend them into a single, flowing line.



1. The bridge of the nose curves out slightly.
2. The bridge of the nose ends, but the contour line continues, curving in slightly.

Front View — Female

The female nose is treated quite differently from the male nose, in that the definition between the bone and cartilage areas isn't as defined. Instead, it is often quite smooth, which is what makes it appear feminine. The chiseled look is a masculine look. Note that the ball at the end of the female nose is small and subtle.



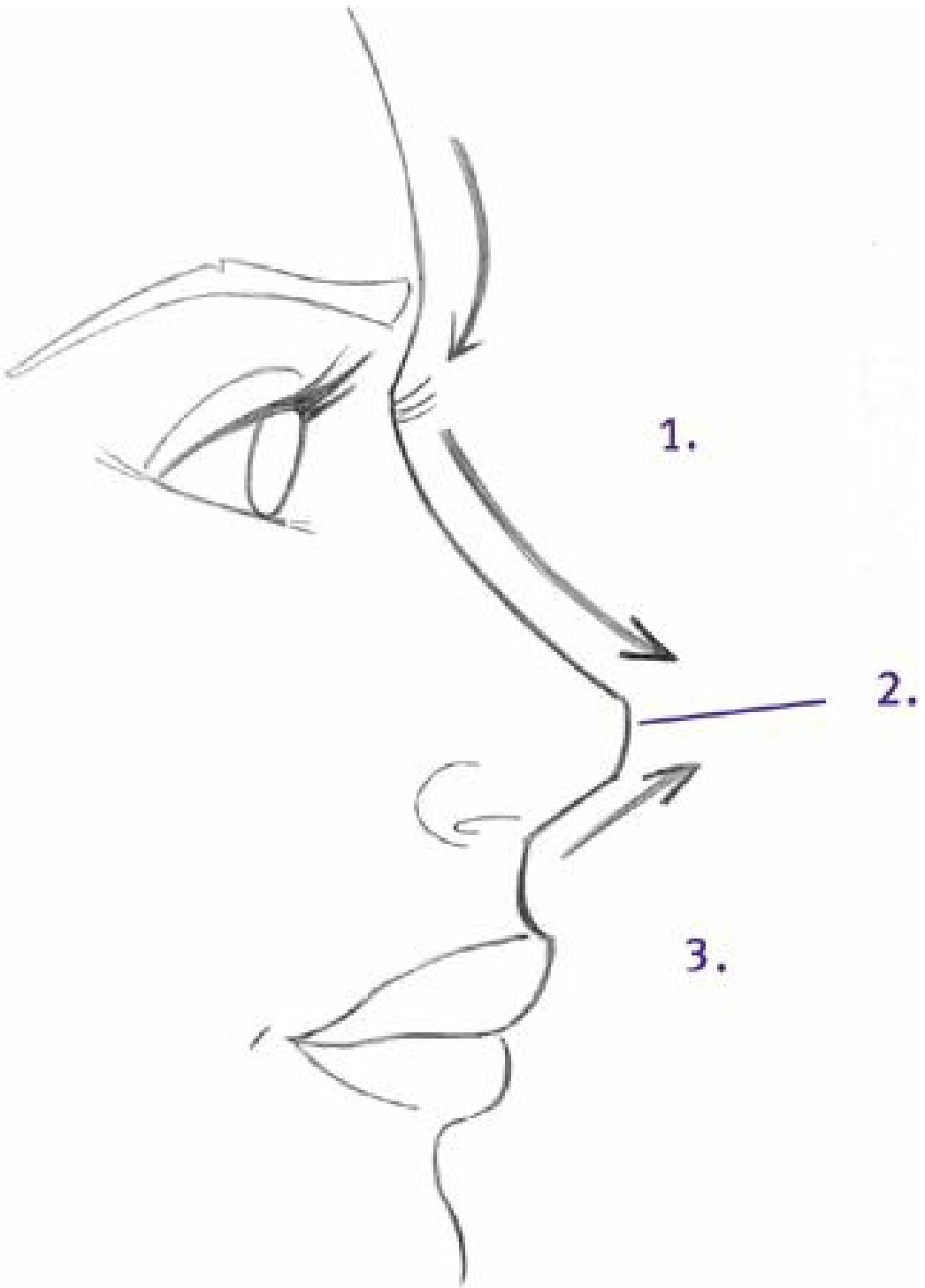
1. Structure of the female nose

In practice, artists often omit much of the definition of the female nose, especially the bridge. This results in a softer overall appearance to the face.

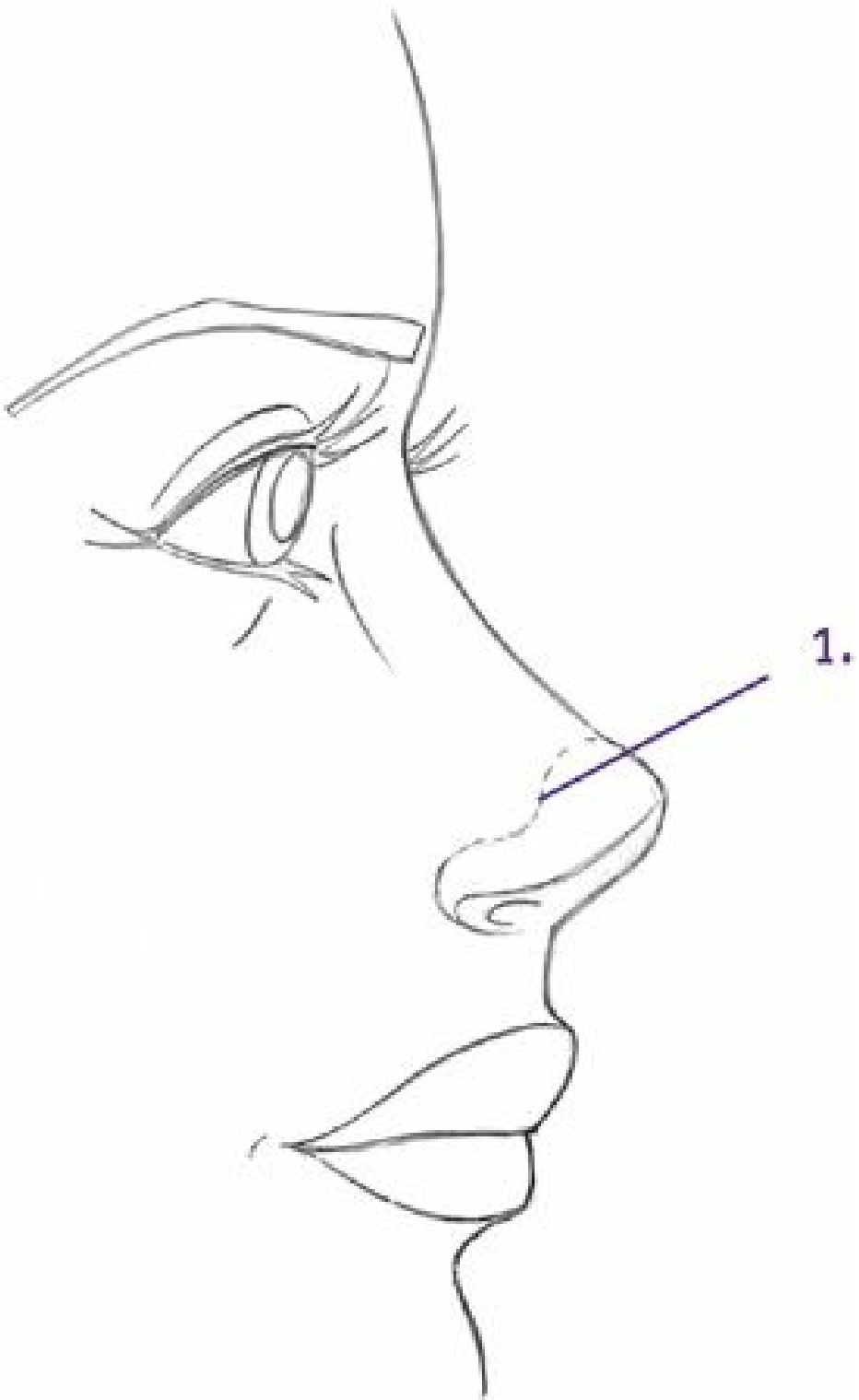
It's a stylistic choice among experienced illustrators to indicate only one side of the bridge of the nose, omitting the line on the other side.

Side View — Female

Compare the smooth profile of the female nose to that of the male nose. The male's heavy brow has also been eliminated on the female forehead. It has been replaced with a soft, round shape. The entire profile has been simplified, resulting in a softer and more feminine appearance.


1.
2.
3.

1. The nose is one uninterrupted, sweeping line.
2. Small area of the tip can be rounded off.
3. Upturned

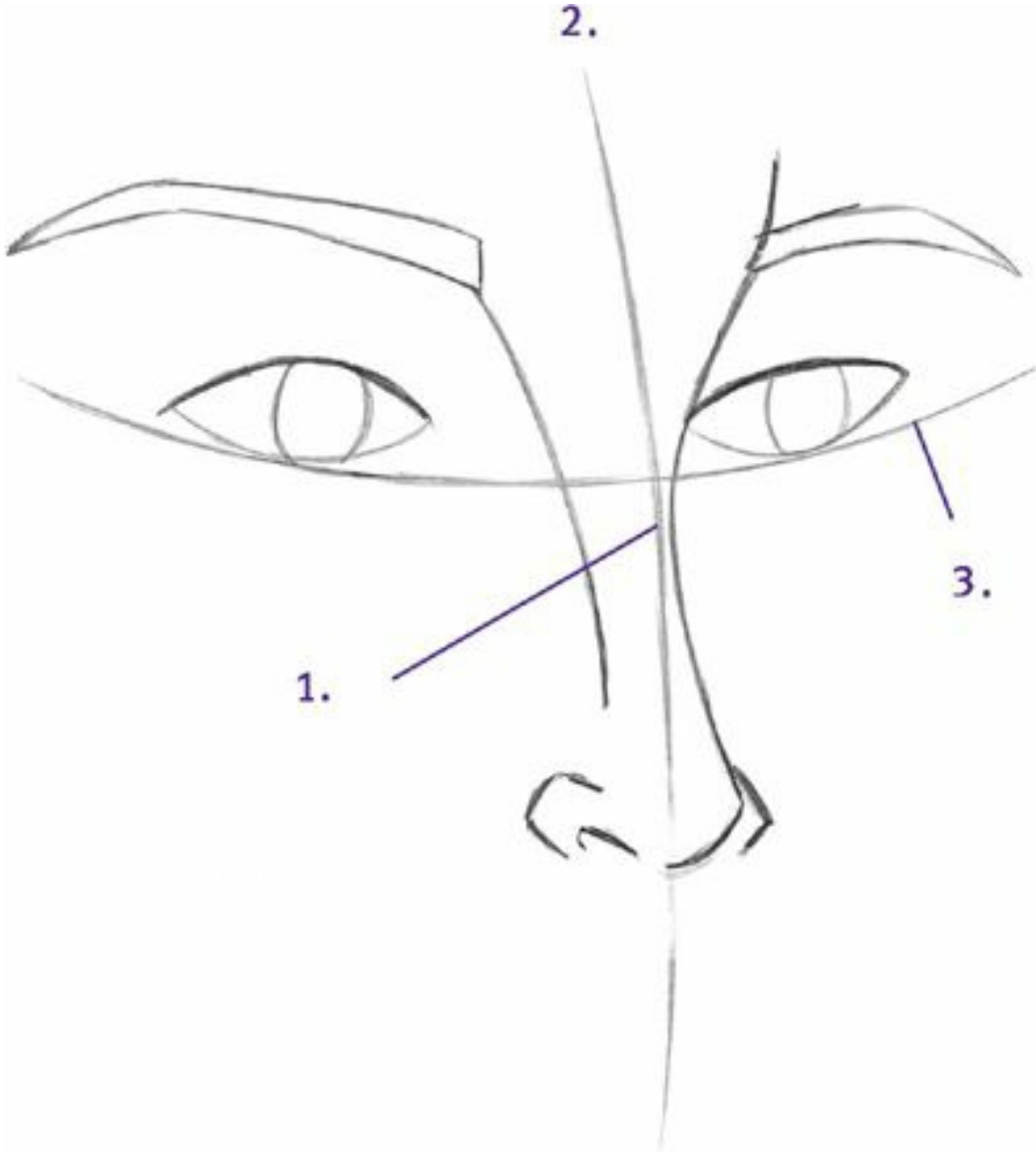

1.

1. Use very few markings to define the female nose.

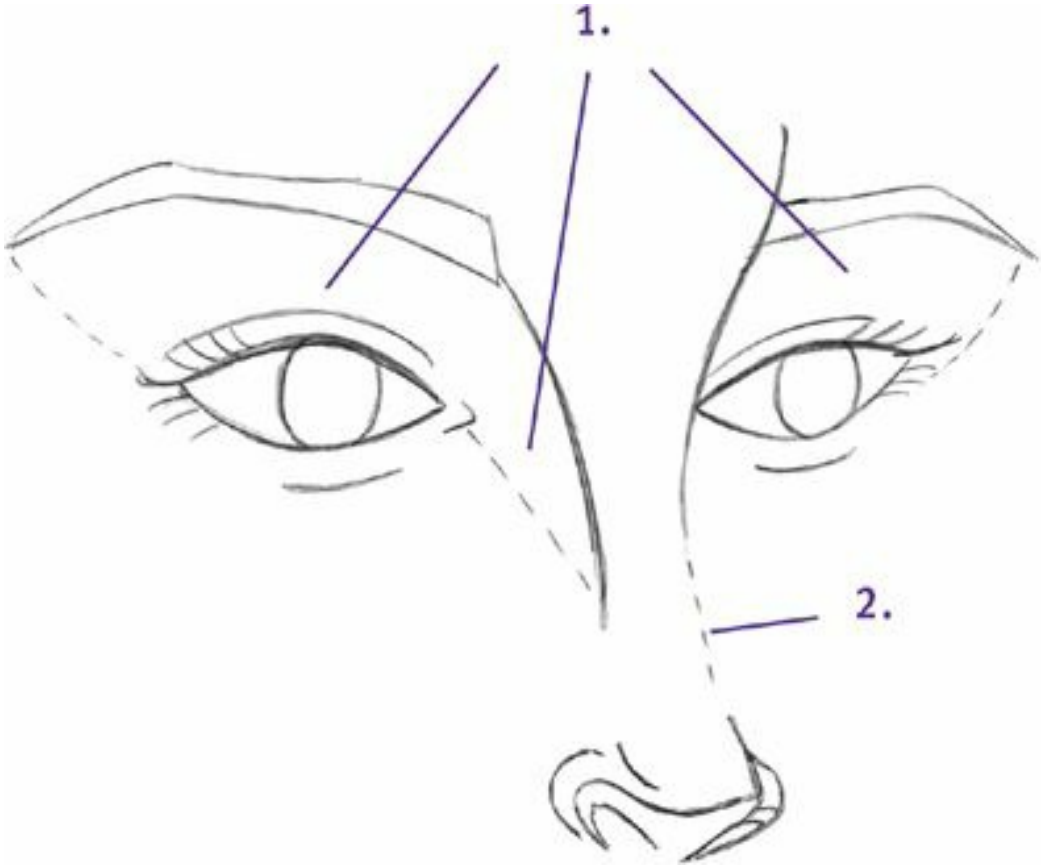
Shadow underneath the nose is subtle or omitted entirely.

3/4 View — Female

The female nose in the 3/4 view glides down from the eyebrows to the tip of the nose in one sweeping line. The ball of the nose is small, and the nostrils have been drawn with only the barest amount of detail necessary. Articulating the holes in the nostrils may be accurate, but it often looks unattractive and therefore is done lightly.



1. The bridge of the nose is wide on top but thin in the middle.
2. Center line
3. The eye line is curved, because it wraps around a curved head. Beginners often draw a straight eye line, but you can see here why that doesn't work.



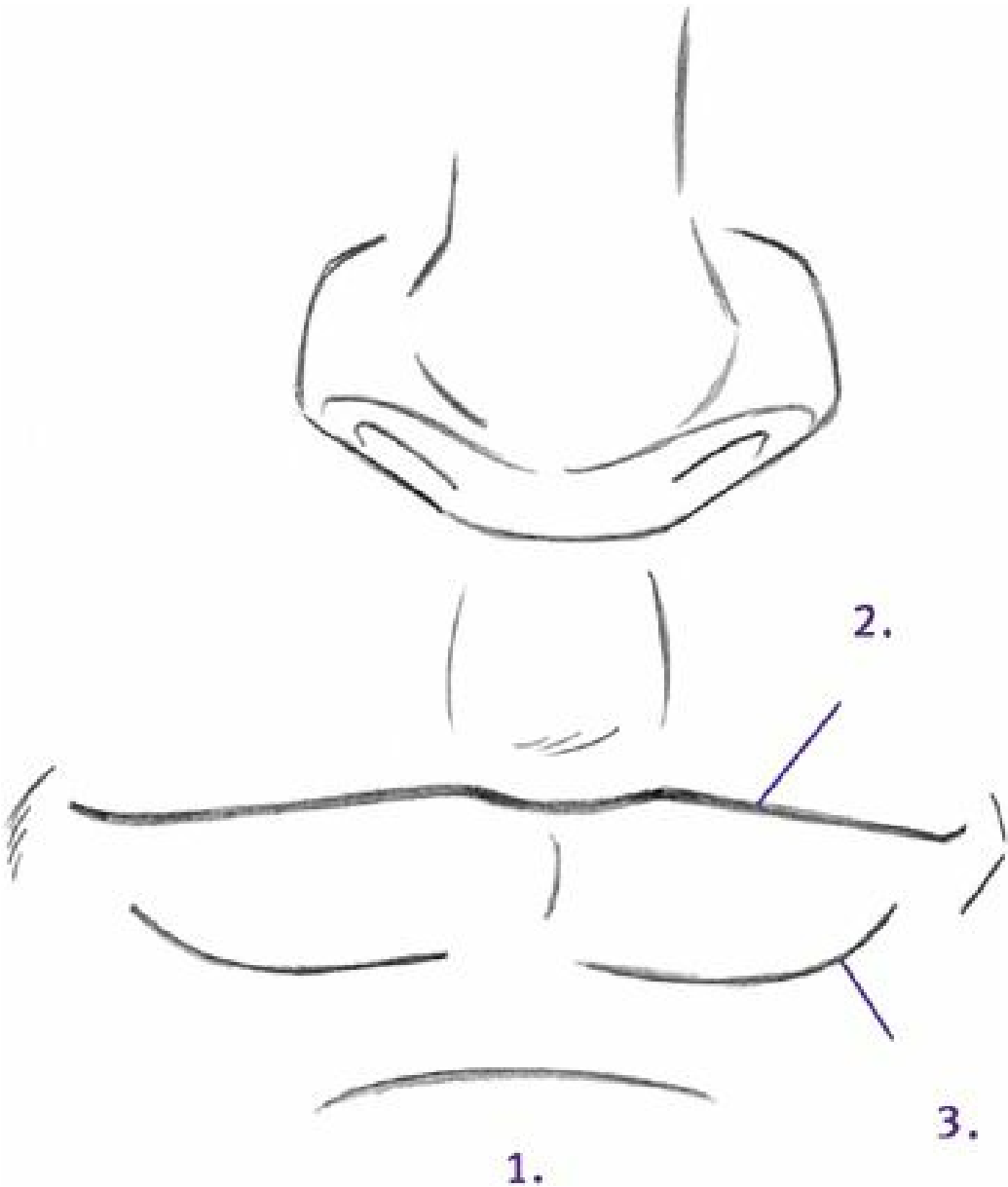
1. Areas for shading indicated.
2. Erase or lighten this line for a feminine look.

Notice the heavy shading between the eyebrows and upper eyelid. The reason for its inclusion is that the eyebrows protrude over the eyes, and therefore, any light from above (sunlight, moonlight, lighting fixtures, diffuse light) casts a shadow on that pocket just above the eye.

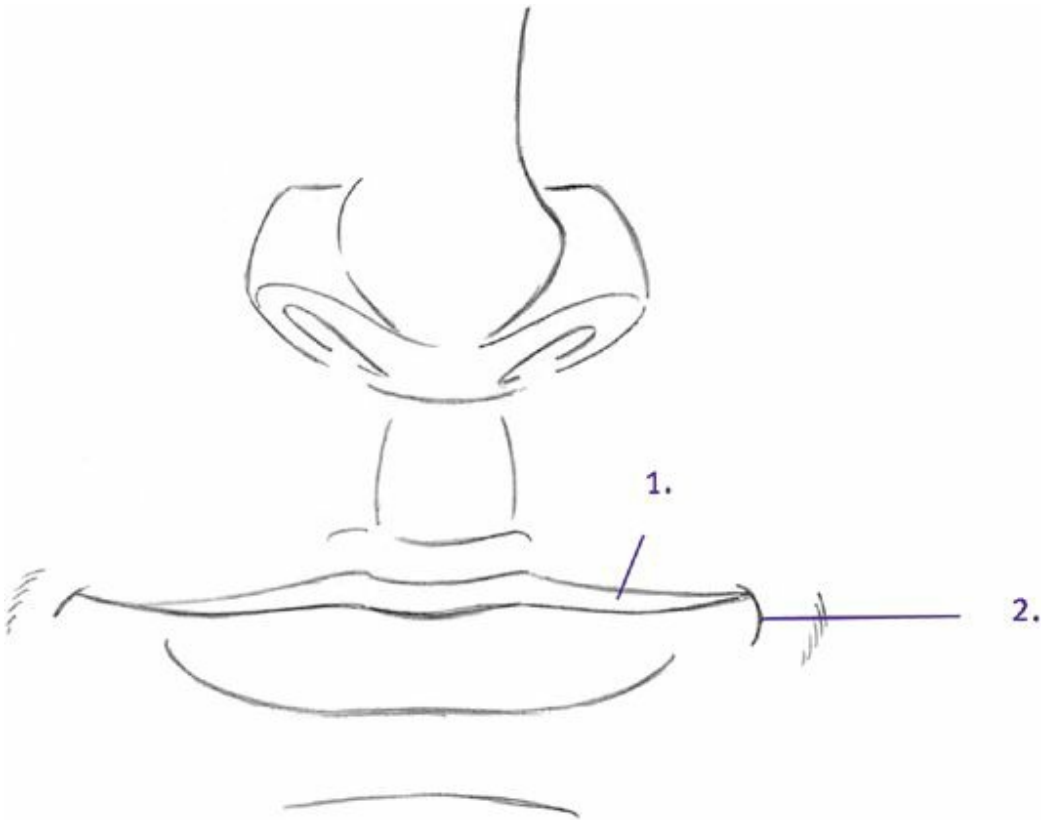
MOUTH

Front View — Male

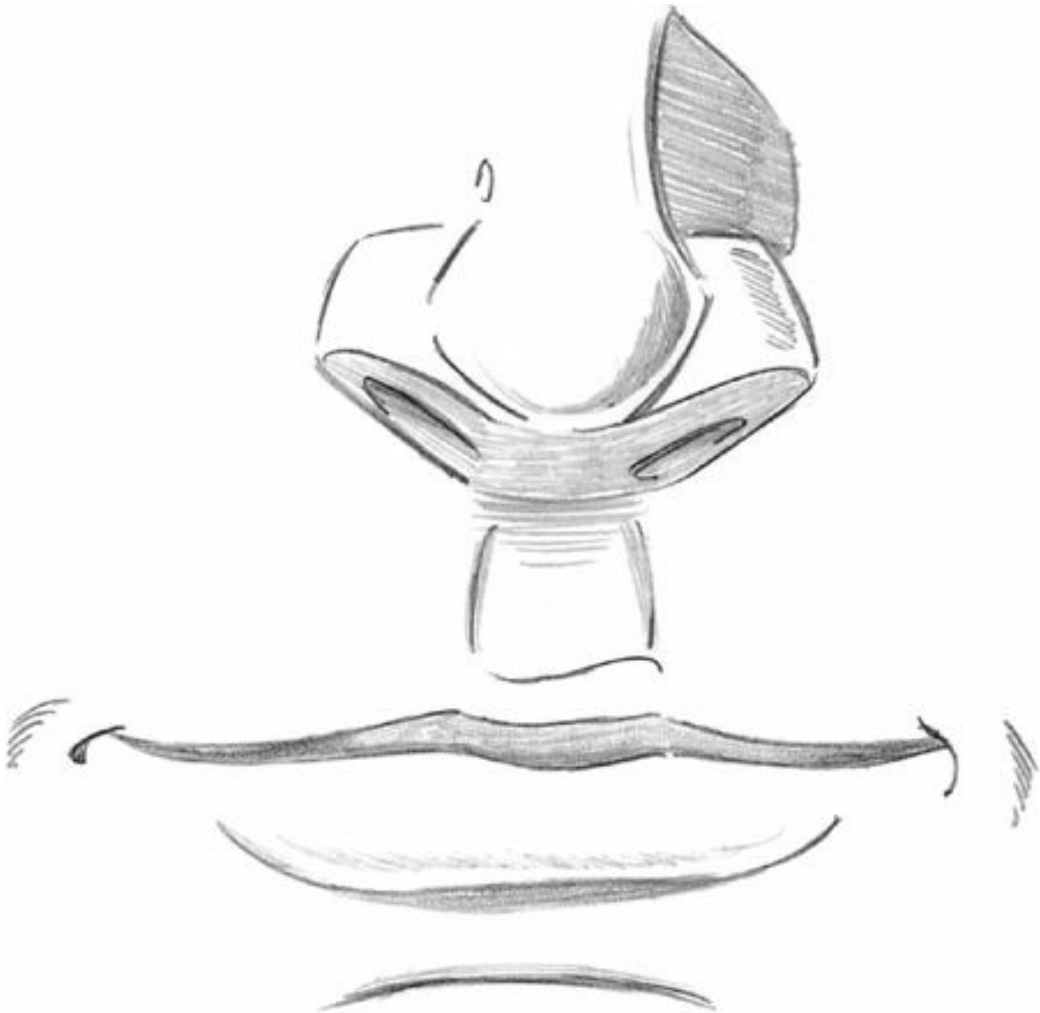
Beginning artists often think of male lips as two lines with no contours. The truth is that male lips have contours as well as thickness, but we've got to treat them subtly so that they don't appear too feminine. Let's take a look at how it's done.



1. Chin
2. The basic contour of the upper lip
3. Shape of the lower lip, which is actually split into two separate halves.



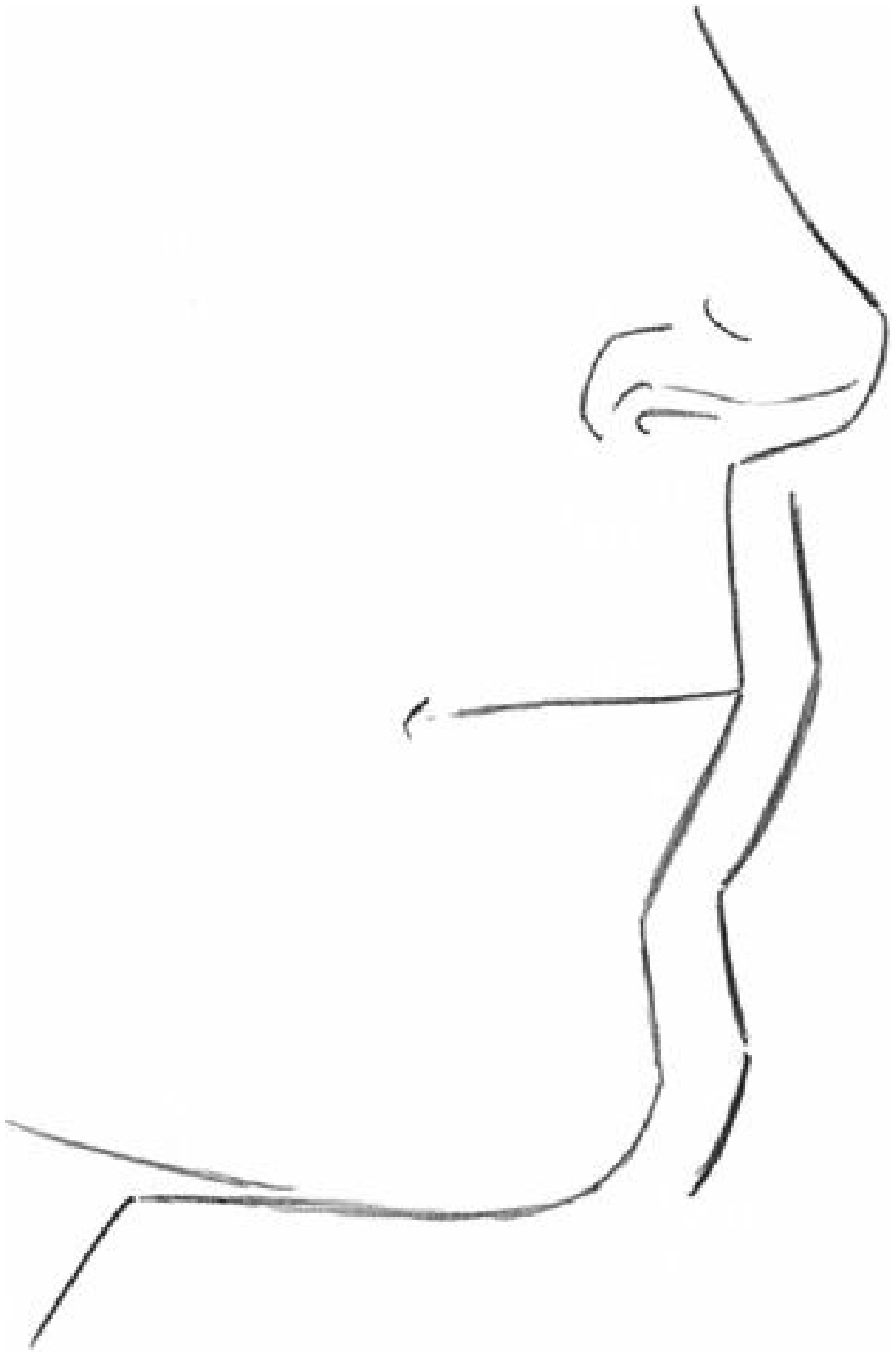
1. Create a thin dimension for the upper lip, which never acquires any significant thickness.
2. Add small creases at the sides of the mouth.



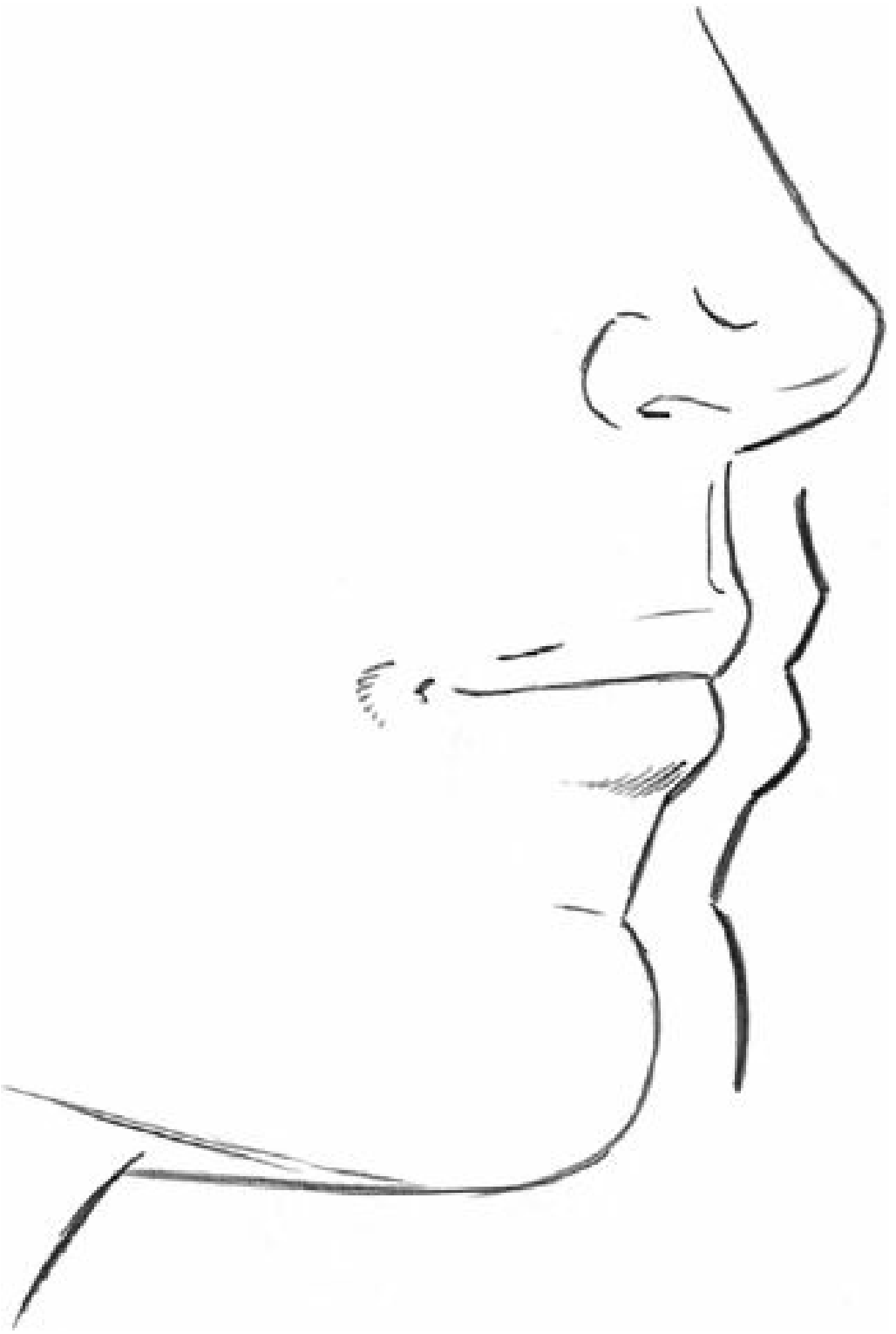
The upper lip is wider than the lower lip. Shade the upper lip and add a patch of shadow below the bottom lip.

Side View — Male

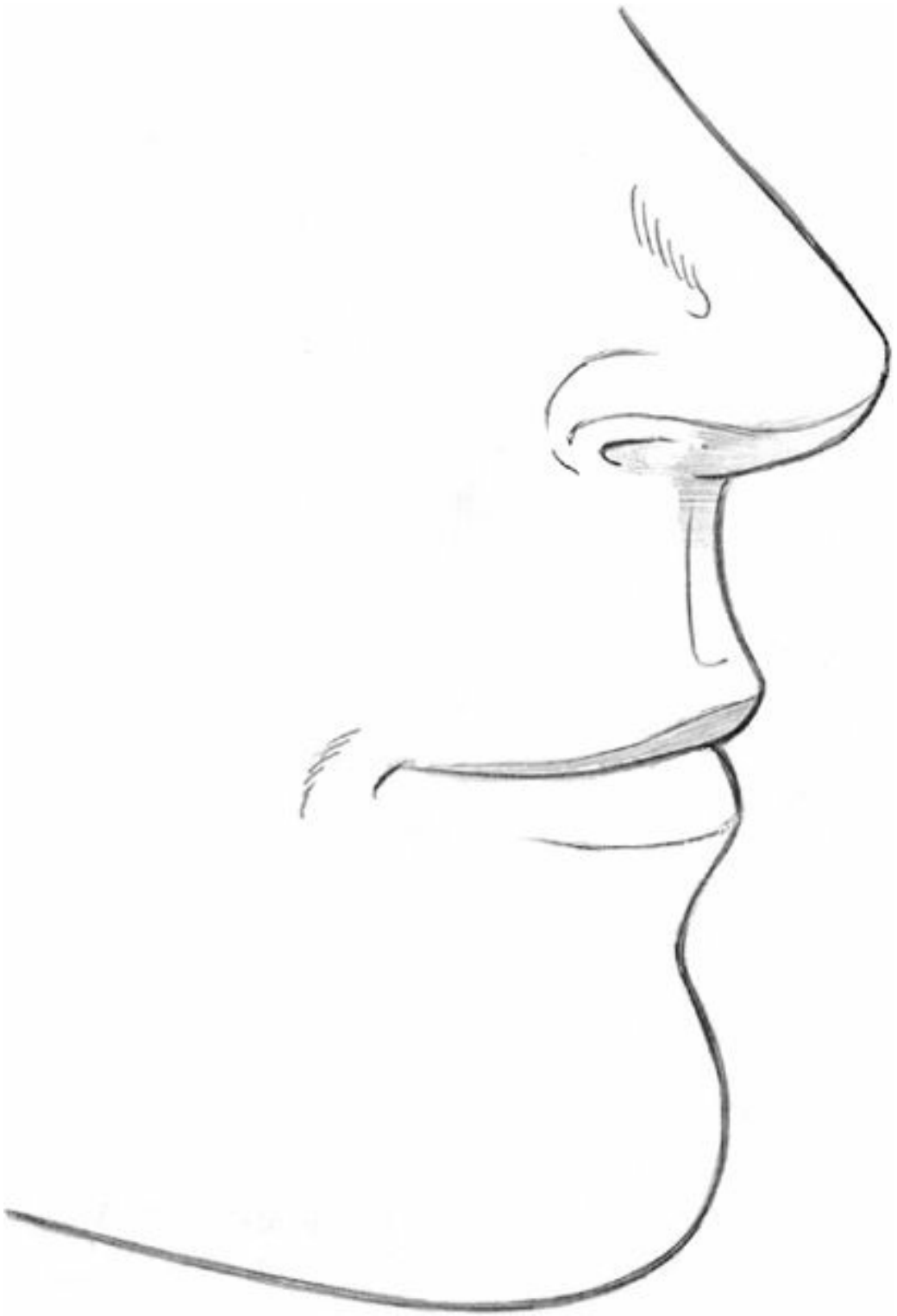
Novice artists often stumble at the profile—specifically the lower half of the face. It's an area that requires a little troubleshooting. The outline of the front of the face below the nose is never a flowing line; it's a line with many abrupt shifts in angles. Even the lips possess their own separate planes.



Incorrect Side-View Mouth. In this example, the lower half of the profile has been simplified; but it's wrong. You can't get around the details.

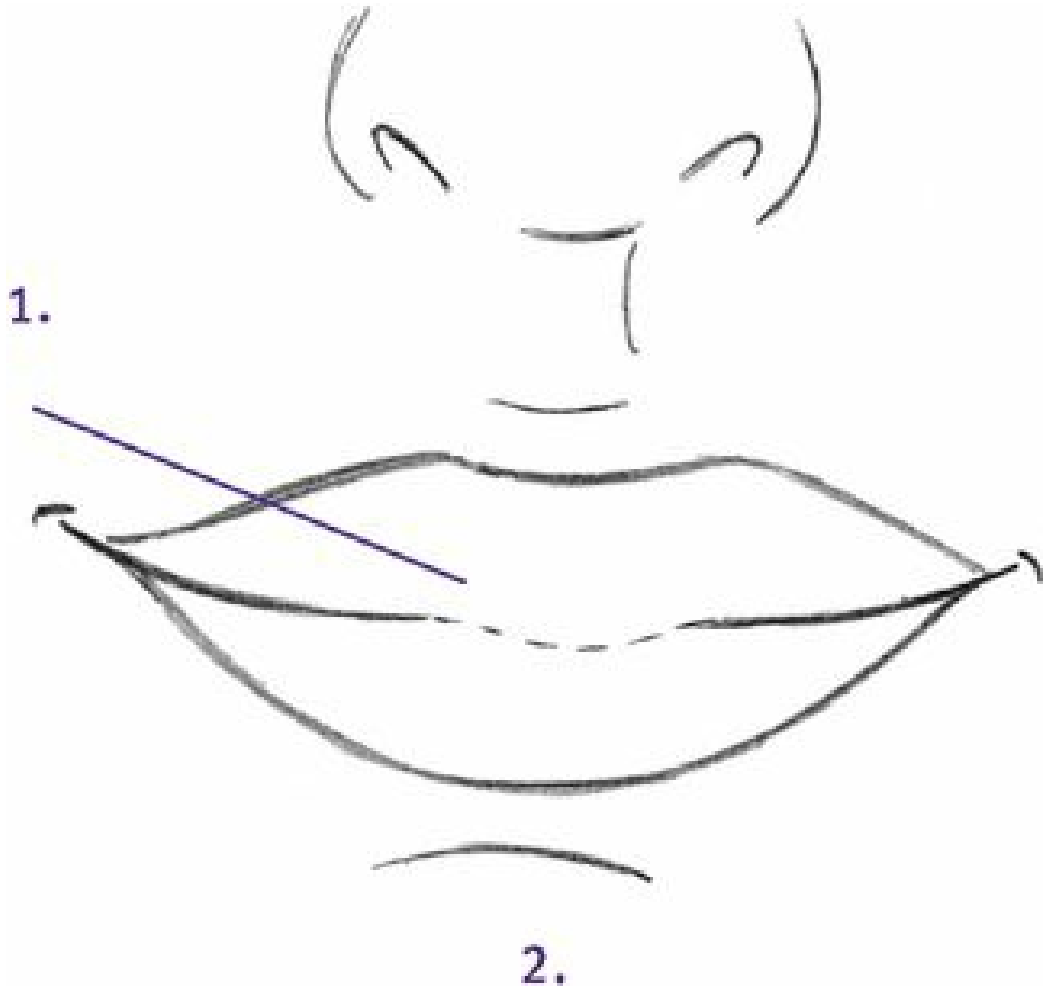


Correct Side-View Mouth. All the small shifts of angles are articulated. Even the angle of the lips is articulated.

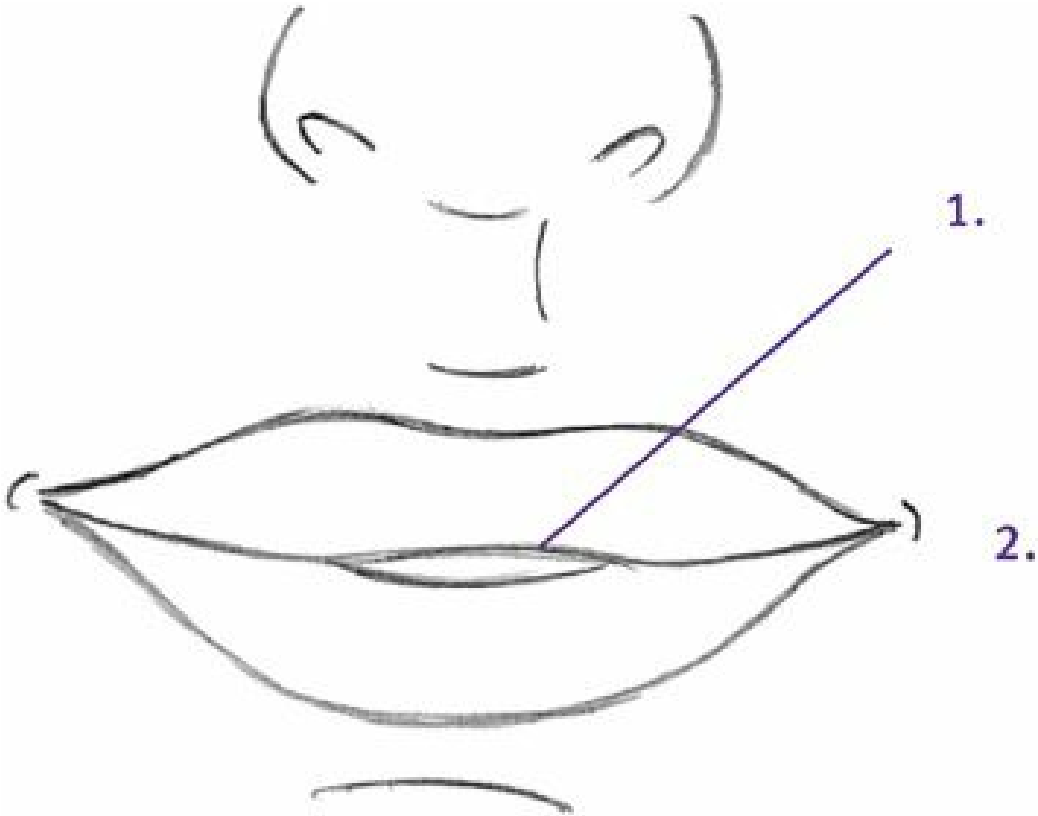


Front View – Female

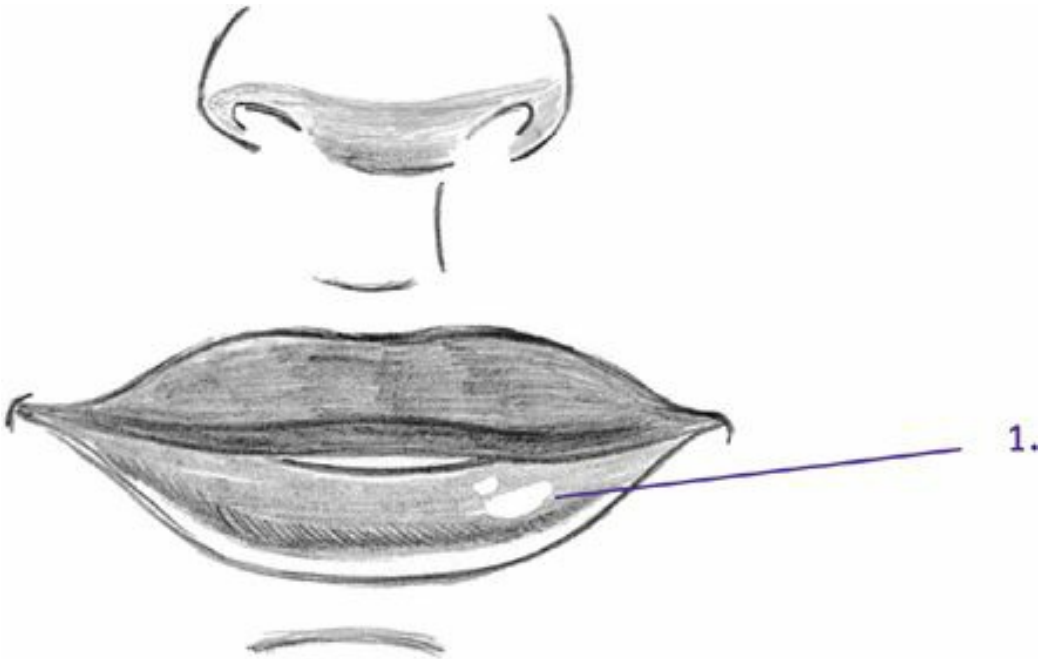
Many people find drawing attractive female lips challenging. Just remember: Keep the upper and lower lips looking smooth with only subtle curves, and you'll do well. Mistakes often occur from trying to get too fancy.



1. The upper lip can be drawn with a slight dip in the middle, which adds extra width.
2. Subtle indication of chin



1. When the lips purse, it looks best to eliminate the dip in the bottom of the upper lip, which appeared here in the prior step.
2. Very small crease lines appear at the corners of the mouth.



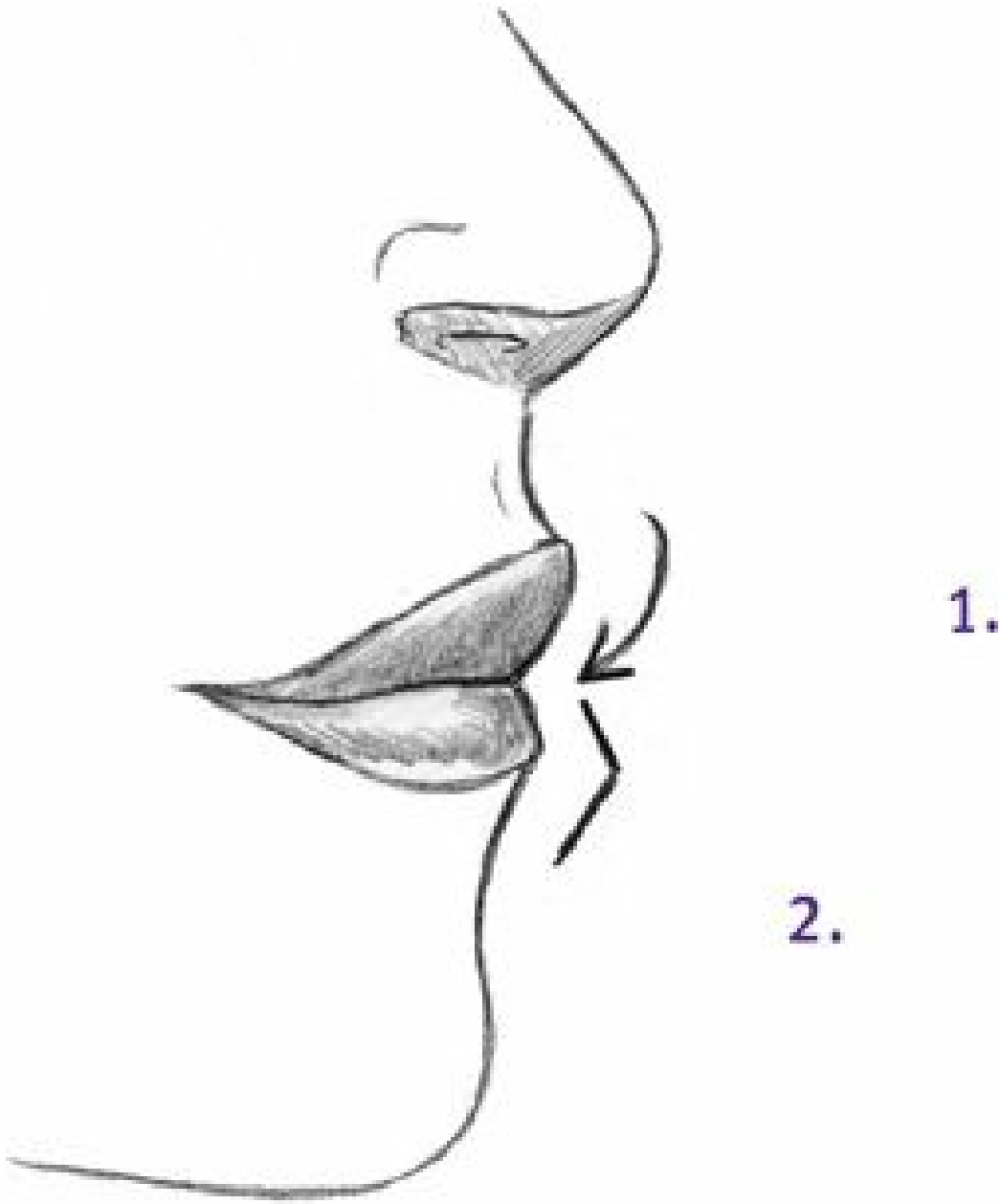
1. Add a small shine to the bottom lip.

Side View — Female

Female lips, in the side view, require a delicate touch to appear attractive. Fortunately, there are a few easy-to-follow rules of thumb that produce classic beautiful lips. First, never draw thin lips—always full. Second, avoid symmetry: In other words, make one lip thicker than the other. It doesn't matter which; in this example, I've chosen the bottom. And third, keep the length short, but the width thick.

1. Upper lip curls up.

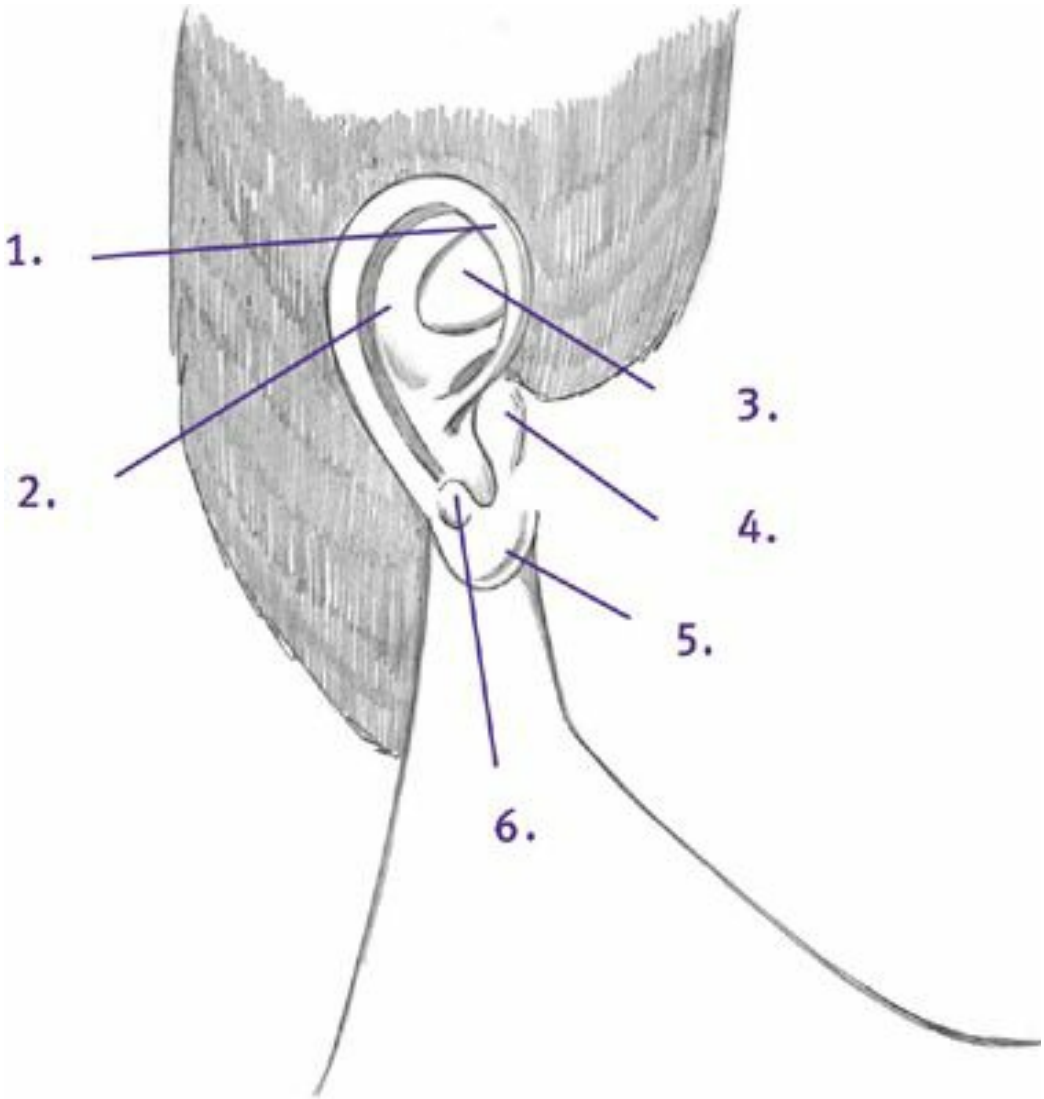
2. Bottom lip is more horizontal.



1. Upper lip curves inward.
2. Bottom lip crests to a point.

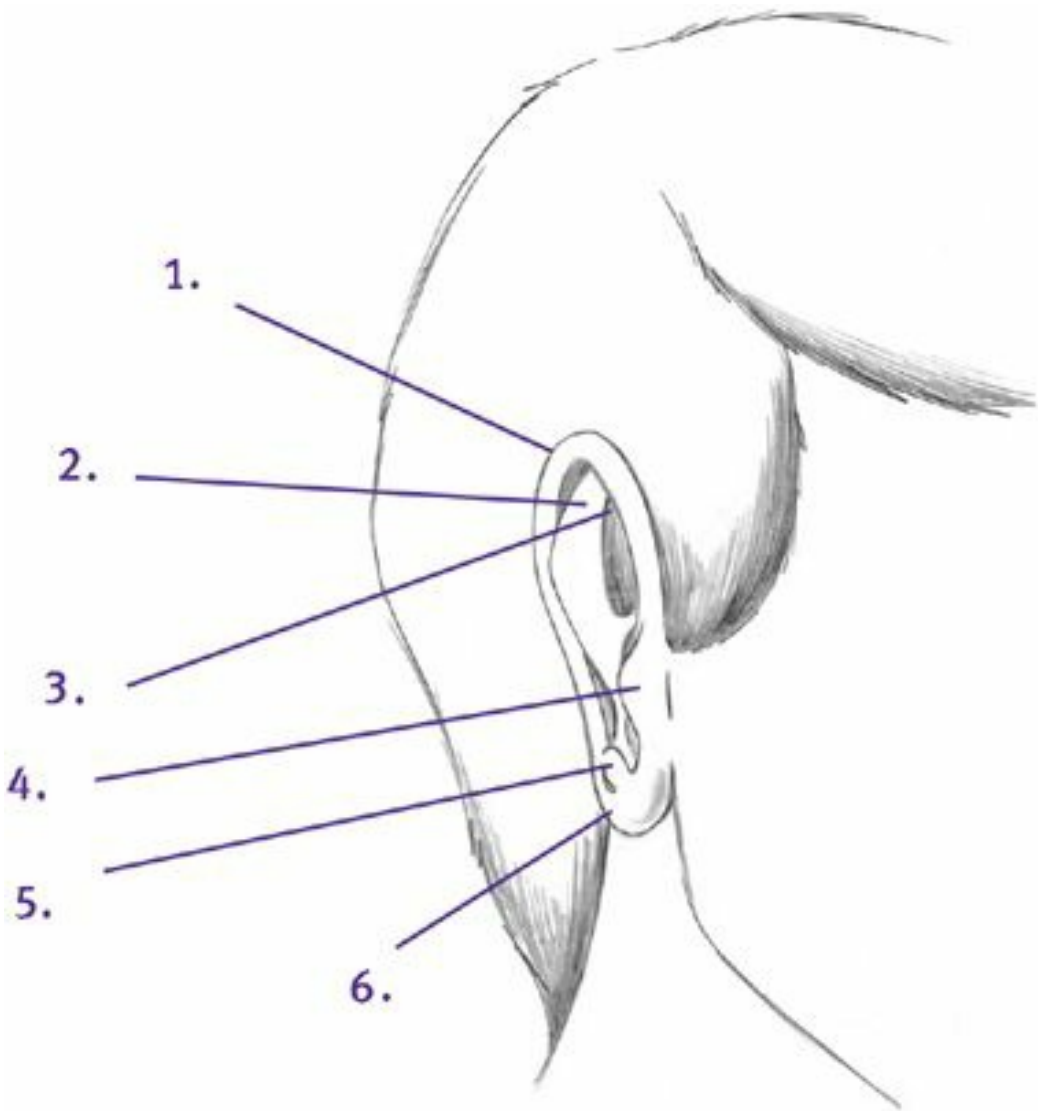
EARS

Because there's no significant difference between the construction of male ears and female ears, we'll use one example to represent both sexes. Don't be frustrated if you don't get it on the first try. Ears are deceptively difficult to draw. We'll try to make it easy by labeling the components in lay terms, rather than in their Latin names.



1. The outer ridge wraps around the entire ear.
2. Inner ridge
3. Inner major ear pocket
4. Major ear flap
5. Earlobe
6. Minor ear flap

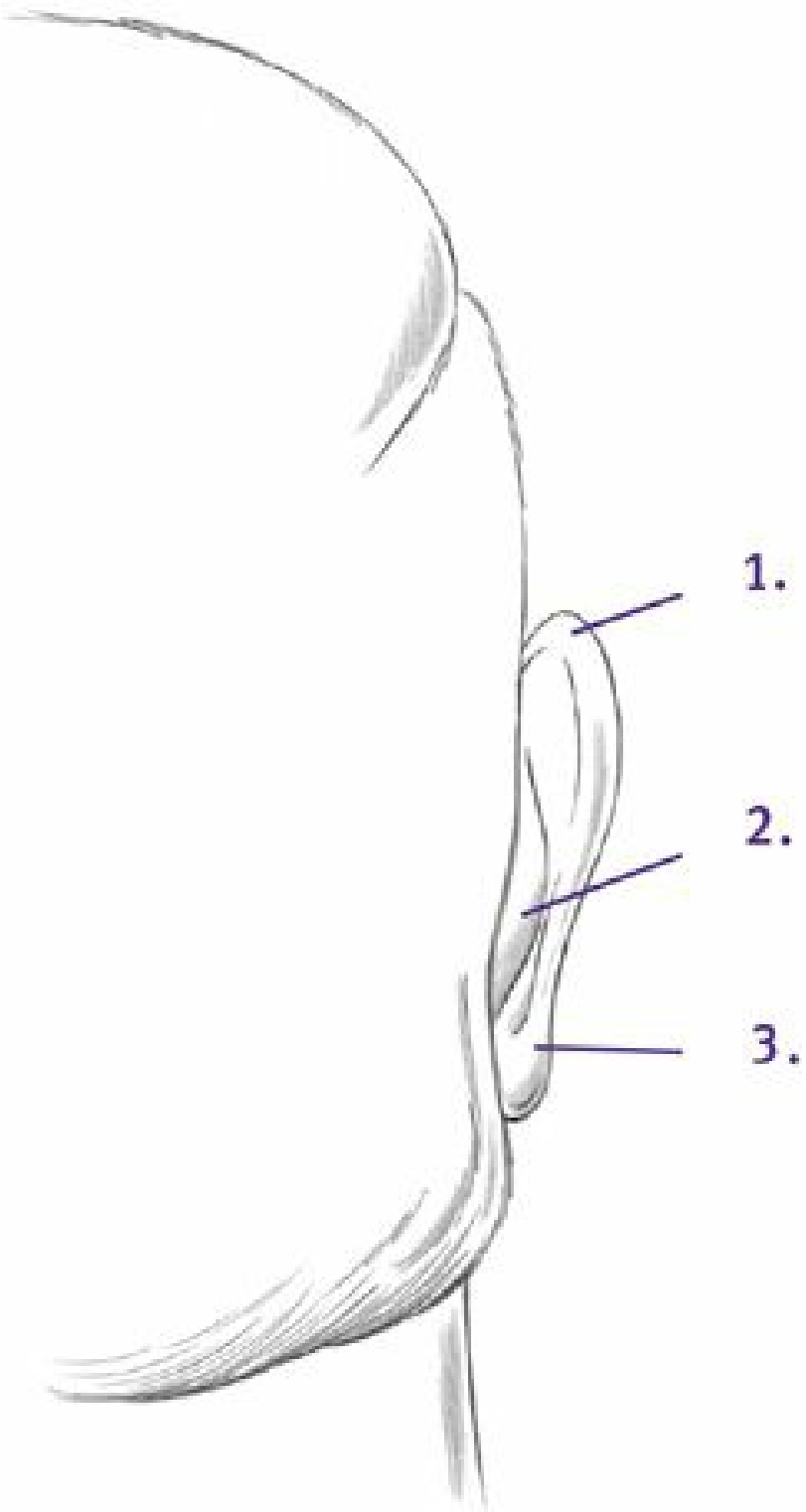
3/4 View



1. Outer ridge
2. The inner ridge bumps out, just a notch, past the outer ridge, in the 3/4 view.
3. Major ear pocket
4. Major ear flap
5. Minor ear flap
6. Ear lobe

Note how the entire shape of the ear narrows—not unlike the way an oval narrows as it turns to the side—in perspective.

Rear View

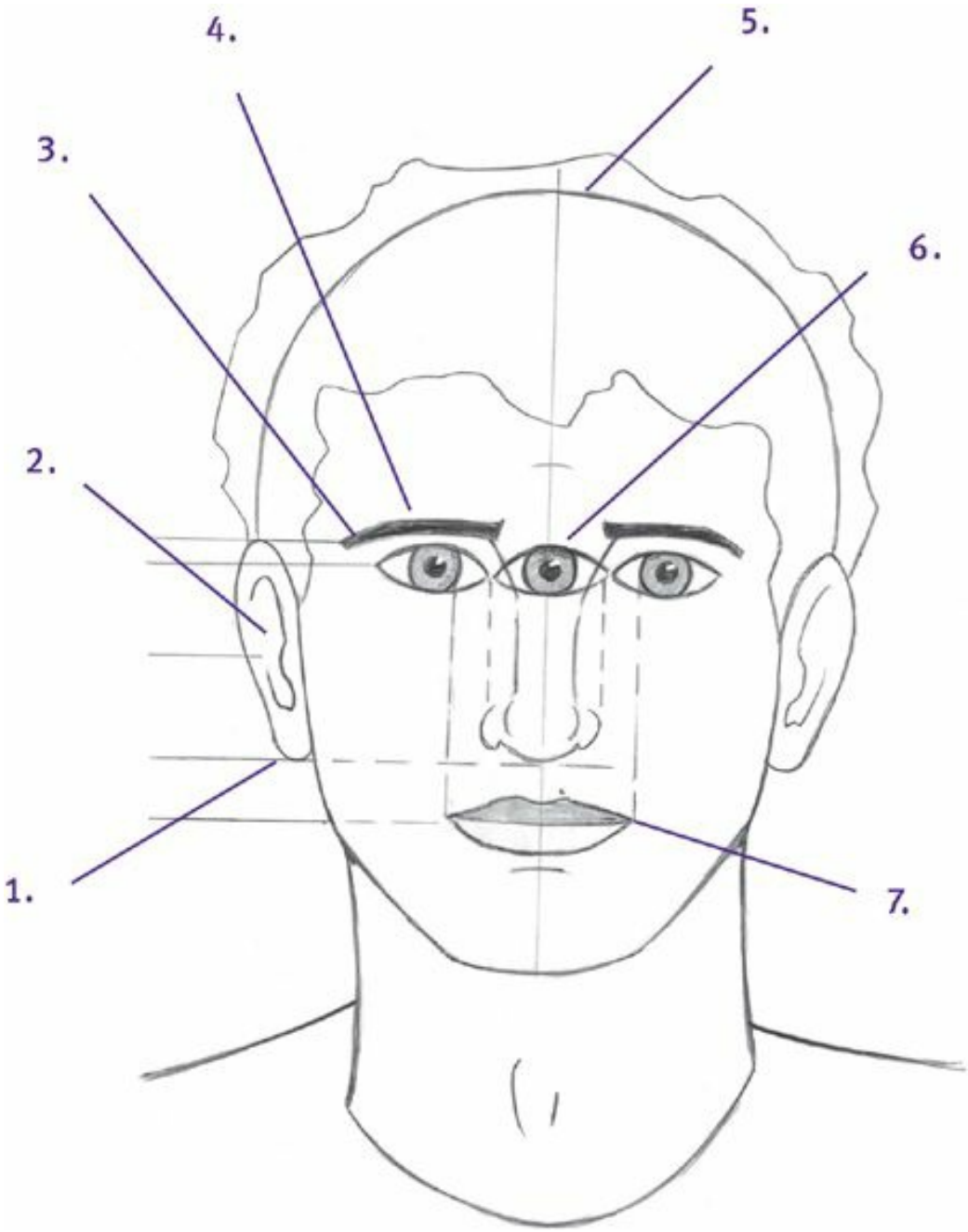

1.
2.
3.

1. Outer ridge
2. Ear cup
3. Earlobe

The cup of the ear can only be seen from this angle.

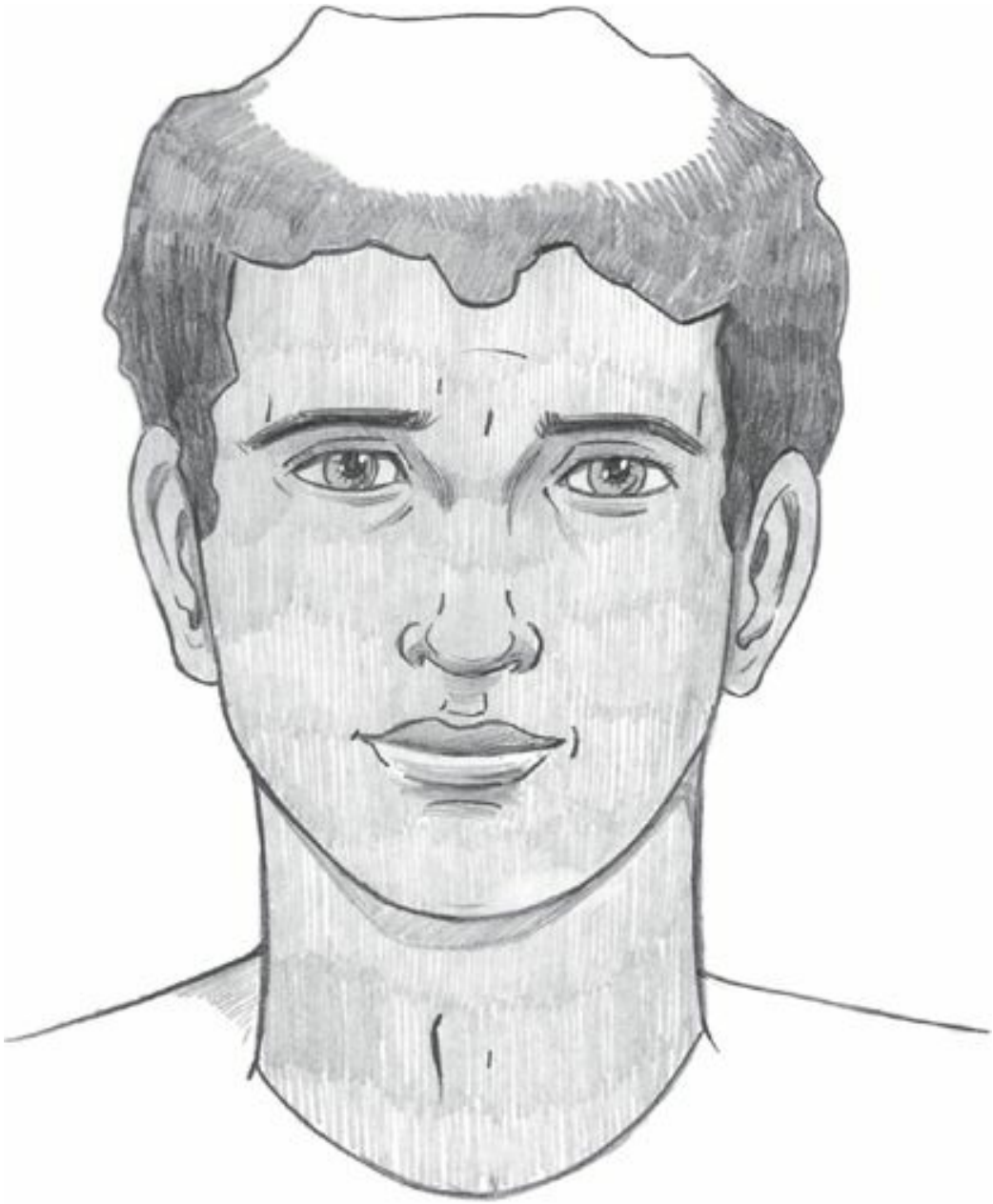
THE PROPORTIONS OF THE FACE

Individuals exhibit subtle differences in their own head and body proportions, which make them unique—and interesting. One person may have smallish eyes. Another may have a particularly wide smile. So the "takeaway" is this: Familiarize yourself with guidelines, and follow them in general, but feel free to make adjustments and to experiment in order to arrive at more individualized personalities.



1. The bottom of ears are at the same level as the bottom of the nose.
2. The top of the ears are at the same level as the eyebrows.
3. The eyebrow is at the same level as the top of the ear.
4. The eyes are located dead center in the middle of the head.

5. The top half of the head (skull) is rounded; the bottom half is more angular.
6. The space between the eyes should be as wide as one eye.
7. The relaxed mouth is as wide as the distance between the two irises.



Everyone's face has individual characteristics, and yet we all share the same basic structure. A classic head such as this represents an appealing example of bone structure and facial construction in the middle range of the many varieties possible.

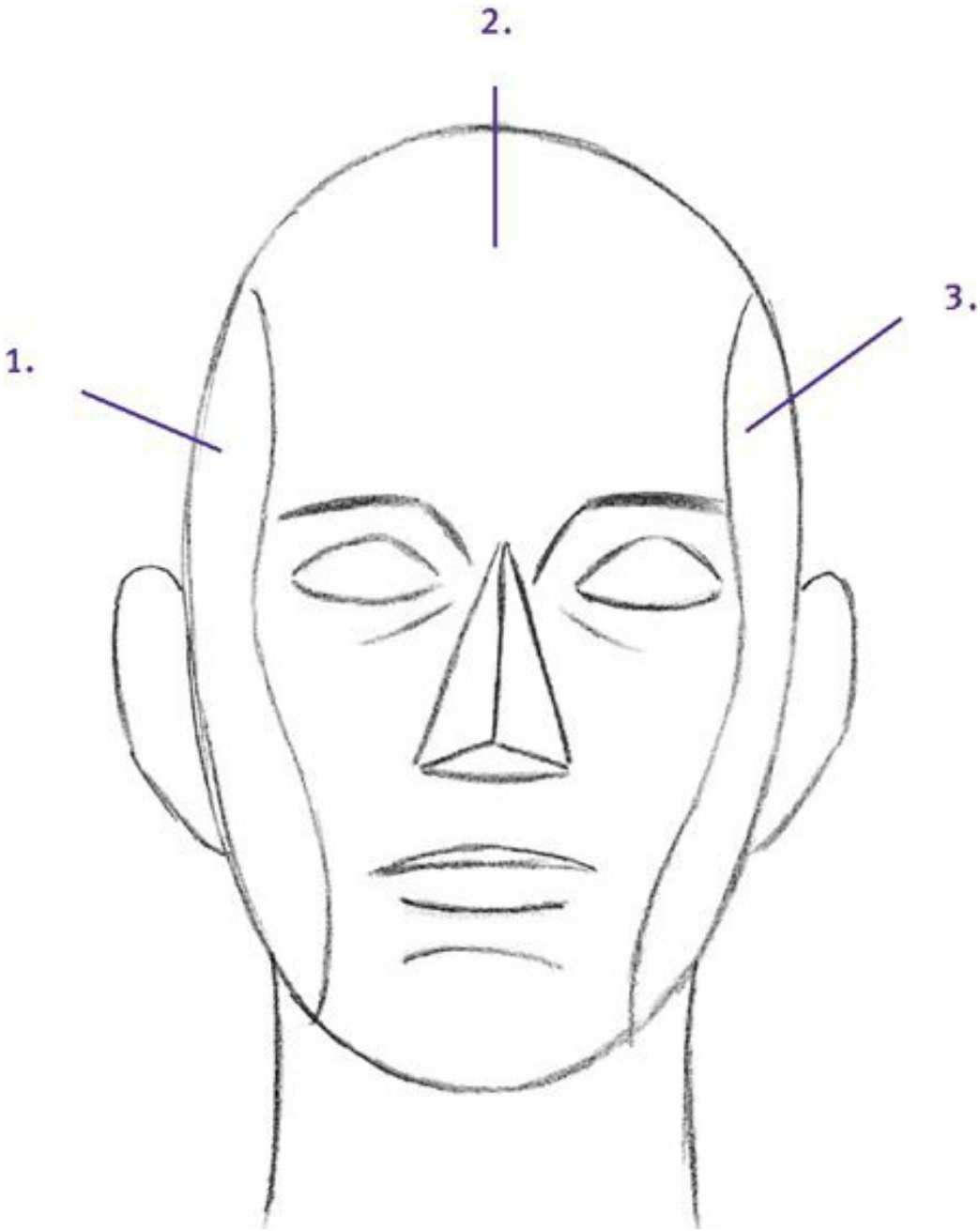
SHADING THE HEAD

In addition to contributing to the mood, shadows serve to effectively highlight the contours of the face, which further defines its shape. Some artists use a great deal of shadow—so much, in fact, that they allow some of the facial features to become subsumed into a pool of blackness. This can be an effective stylistic technique. Other artists use shadows sparingly, only as accents. The manner in which you use shadow is a matter of taste and may become a significant part of your personal style if you choose.

It's essential to first decide where the light source is coming from before one begins to shade an object. The position of the light determines the direction of the resulting shadows. Light causes shadows. Shadows are not random events.

No Directional Lighting

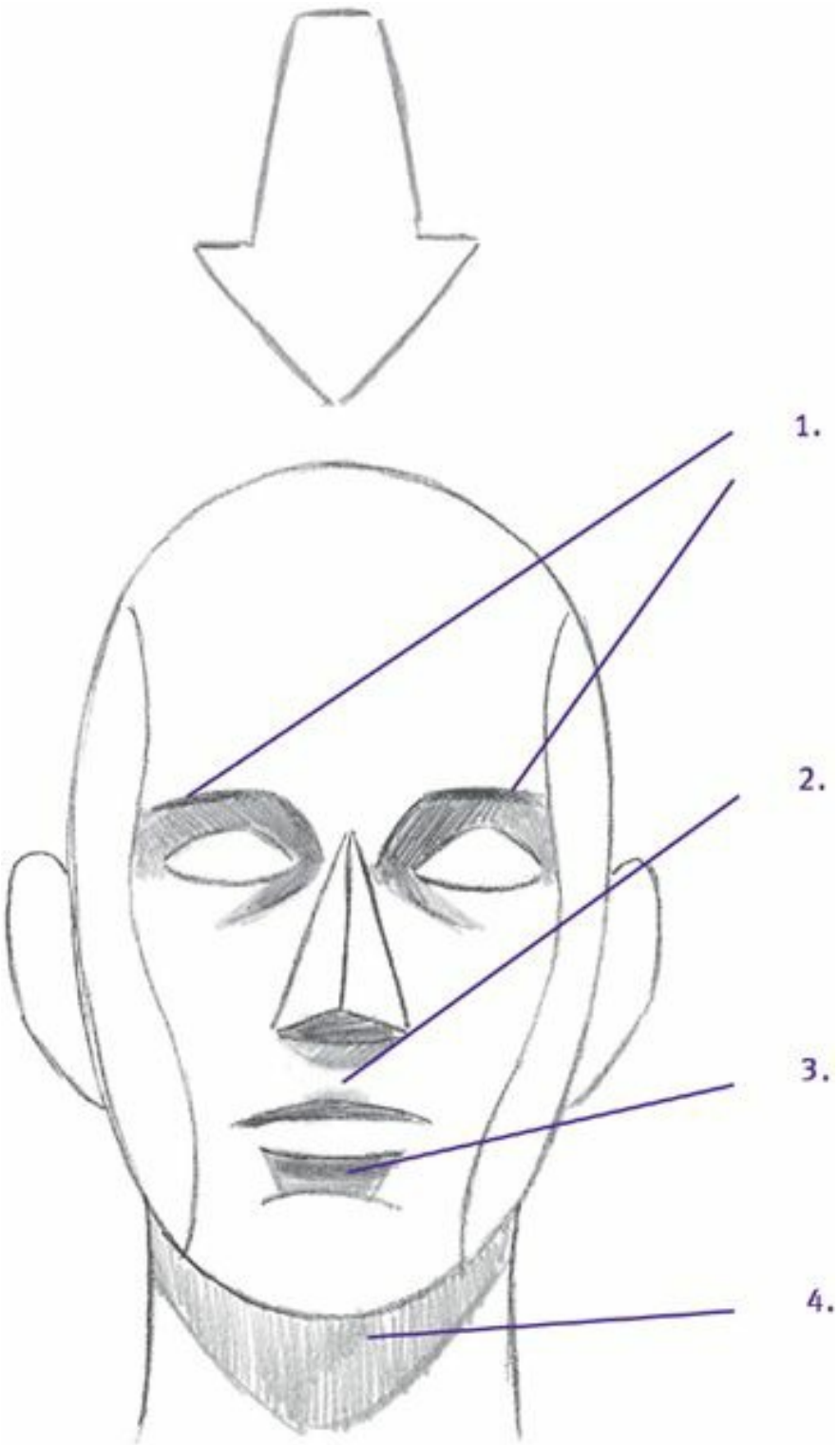
The face is not a flat surface. It is made up of three different planes, and various protruding surfaces, each of which interacts with the light in a different way. The three planes of the face are:



1. The left plane, which is at a 45-degree angle.
2. The front plane, which faces forward (face plate).
3. The right plane, which is also at a 45-degree angle.

Overhead Lighting

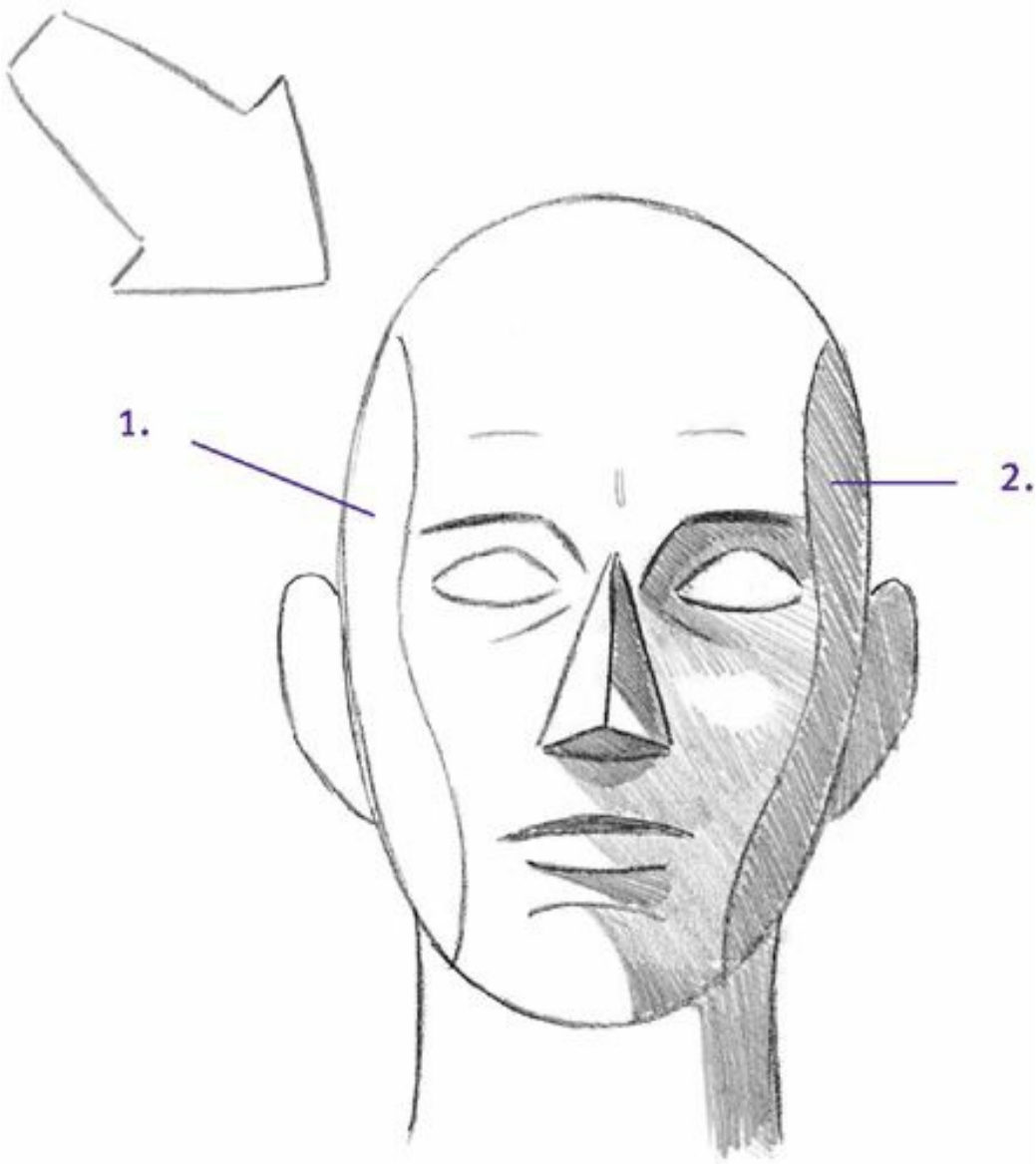
Overhead lighting is the default mode for artists. That's because it's what we assume the lighting condition is, unless otherwise indicated. Overhead lighting comes in so many familiar forms, from ceiling fixtures, sunlight, moonlight, and even interior ambient light.


1.
2.
3.
4.

1. Overhead light typically casts a shadow on the hollow of each eye socket.
2. Overhead lighting casts a shadow under the nose and upper lip.
3. Add shadow under the bottom lip.
4. A rounded shadow is also cast under the jaw.

High-Angle Lighting

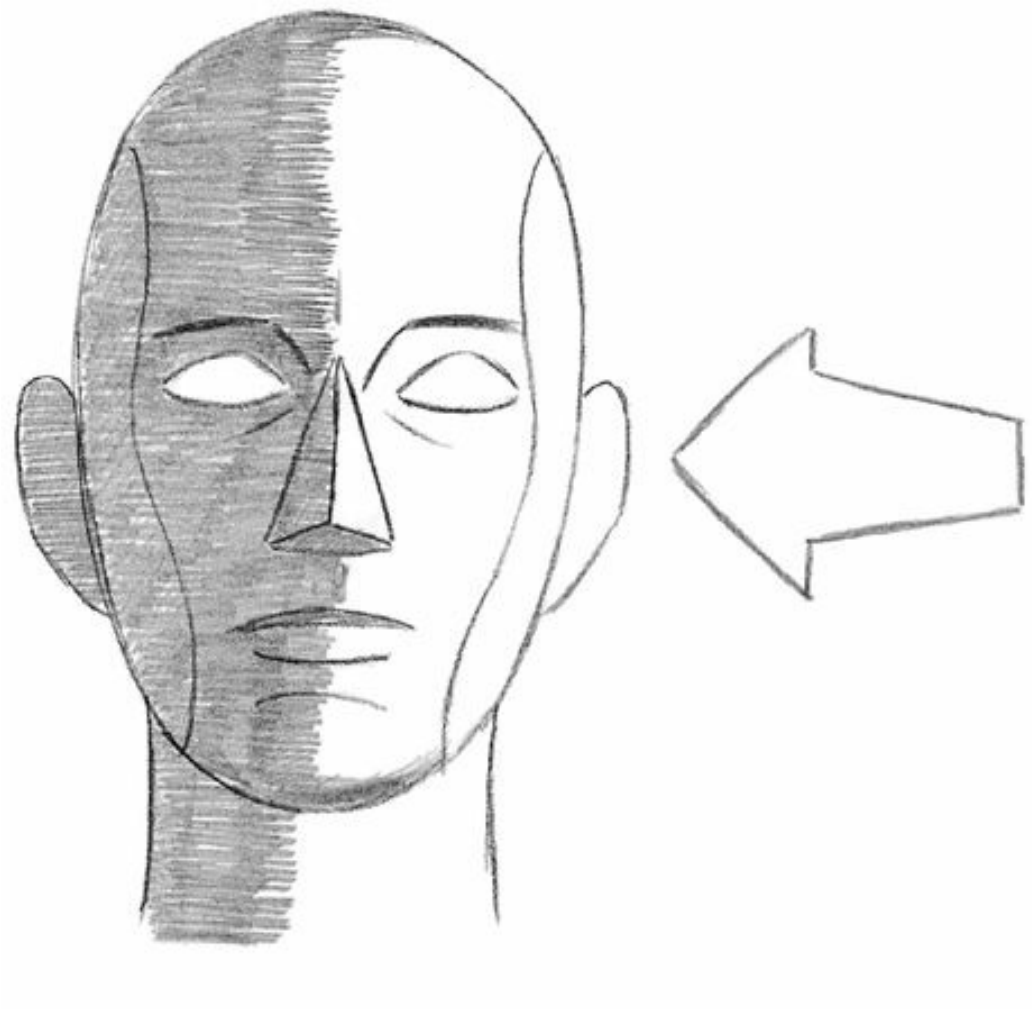
This light effect could be from indoor lighting from a table lamp or from late-afternoon sun. Note how one side of the face catches the light, while the other half is bathed in shadow.



1. Near side is fully illuminated.
2. Far side, blocked from the light, falls into shadow.

Sidelighting

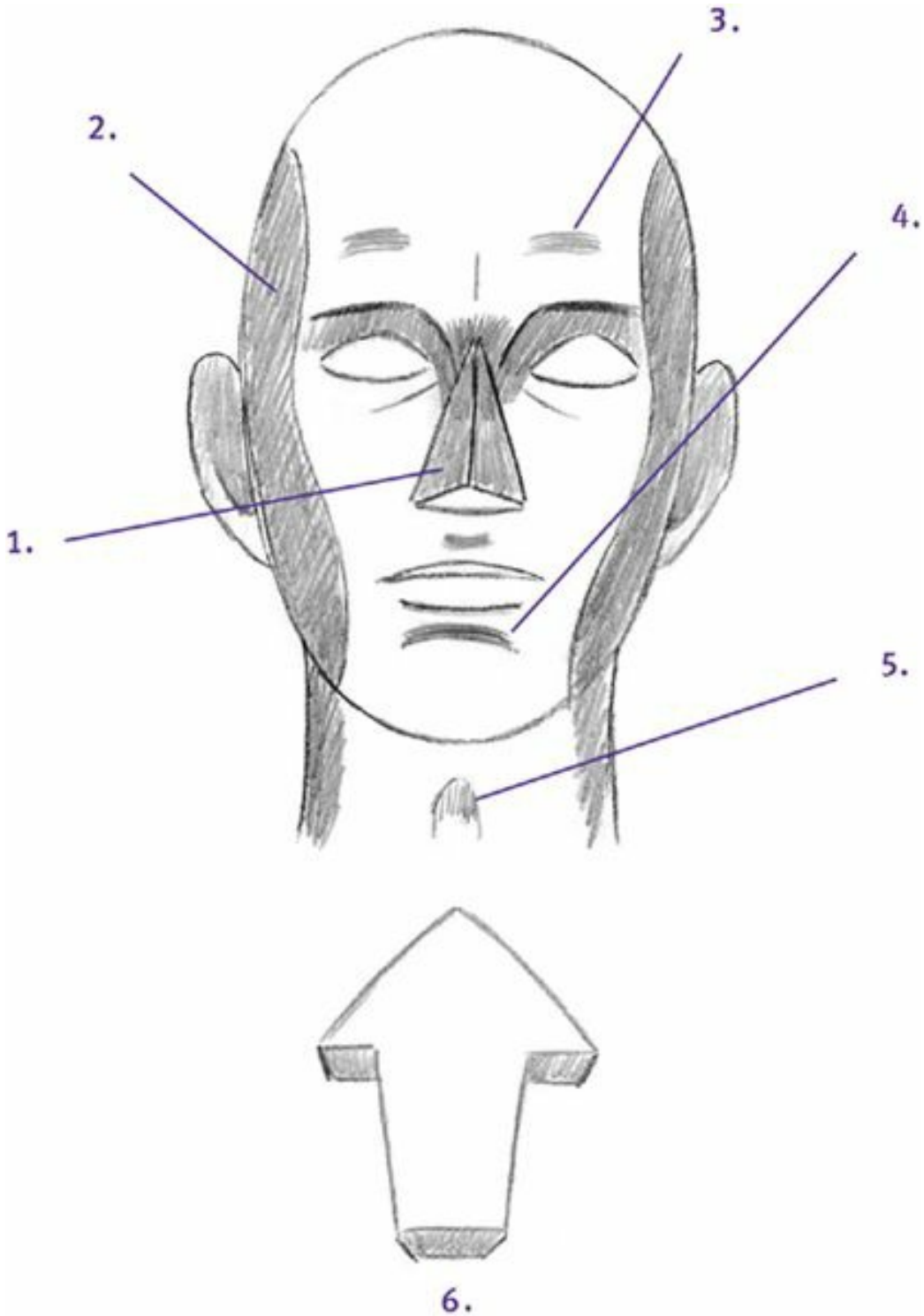
This technique is used to convey drama. The sidelit face does not progress gradually from light, to gray, to dark. Instead, it's more abrupt. This stark juxtaposition of light and dark adds an intensity to the mood. This is a personal favorite of mine. It's also a popular movie effect, frequently captured by storyboard artists.



Virtually half the face is in shadow.

Bottom Lighting

This technique is reminiscent of someone holding a flashlight to his face as he tells a ghost story. Bottom lighting results in unsettling, creepy shadows.


3.
2.
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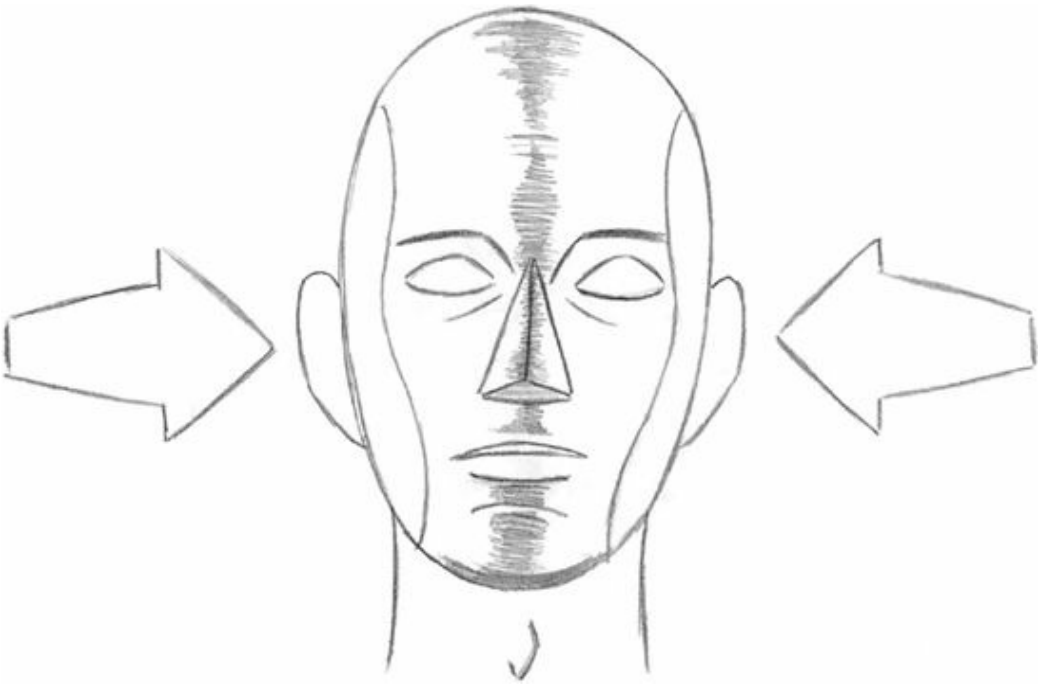
1.
5.
6.

1. Both planes of nose are in shadow.
2. Shadow
3. Cast shadow from minor protrusions of the skull
4. Cast shadow from chin
5. Cast shadow from Adam's apple
6. Light source

Opposing Light Sources

Light sources on either side of the head cause shadows to gather along an uneven, vertical streak in the middle. This strange and captivating effect results in an a mystical image. This is an excellent noir look used in graphic novels and comics illustration.



PORTRAIT VARIATIONS

Now that we've covered the basics for drawing the human head, it's time to put them into practice.

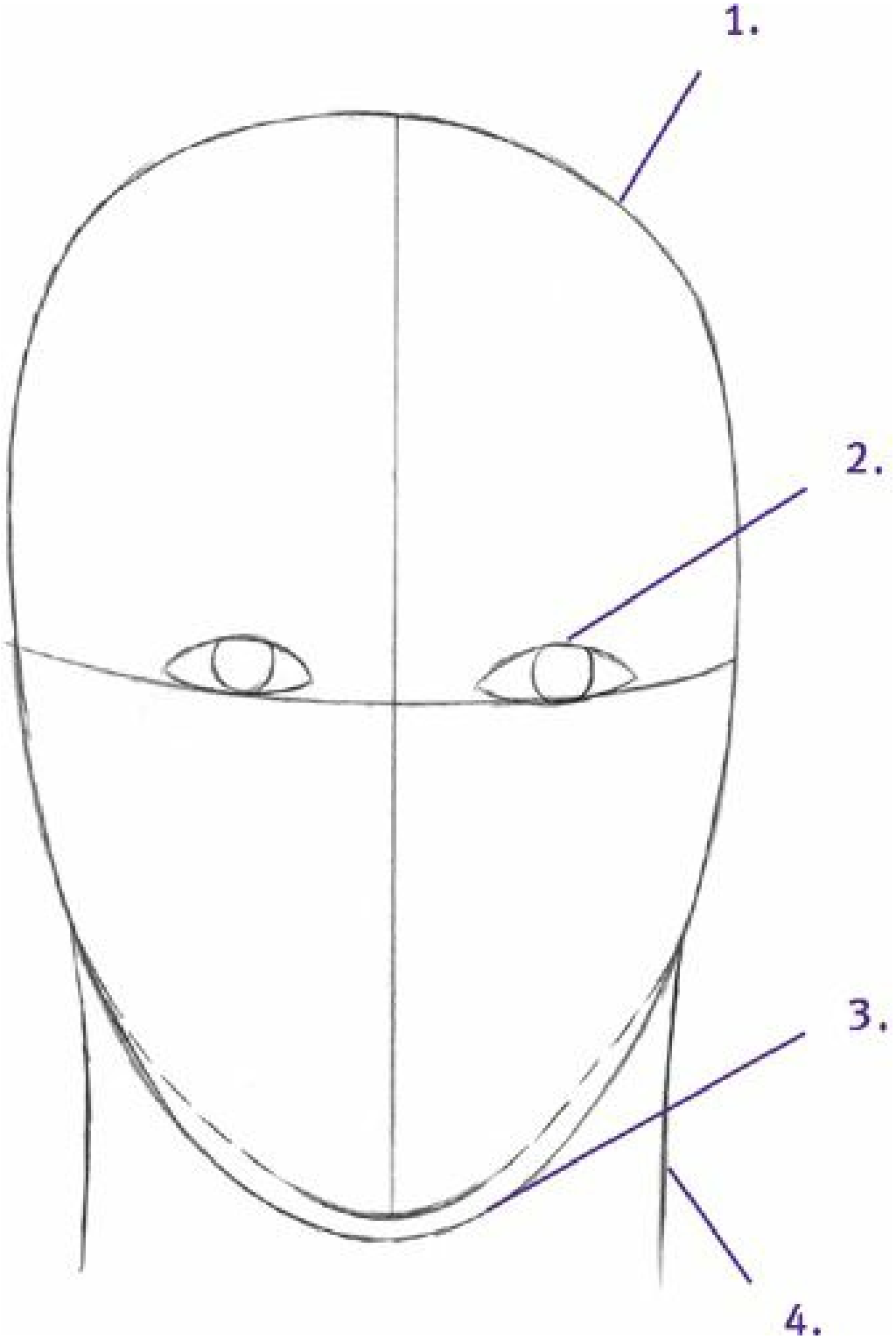
We'll start off with an easy-to-draw front view and then move on to other popular angles of the head. The key to being able to draw faces at any angle is establishing the foundation shape of the head correctly from the outset and then using the center line and eye line to lock the features into place. If you concentrate on these things first, you'll increase your chances for a successful drawing.

THE FRONT VIEW

Male

Believe it or not, symmetrical features of the face, like the eyes and ears, are not always as symmetrical as they appear to be. If you were to look very closely at another person, you would discover small differences in the symmetry of these features. Therefore, if you end up with minor, immaterial differences in the symmetry of your drawings, don't worry.

Still, it's good practice to do a quick spot check before you finish your drawings. Are both eyes the same amount of space away from the edge of the head? Are the ears on the same level? How about the eyebrows? Do they start off high and then angle downward toward the bridge of the nose at a similar angle?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2.
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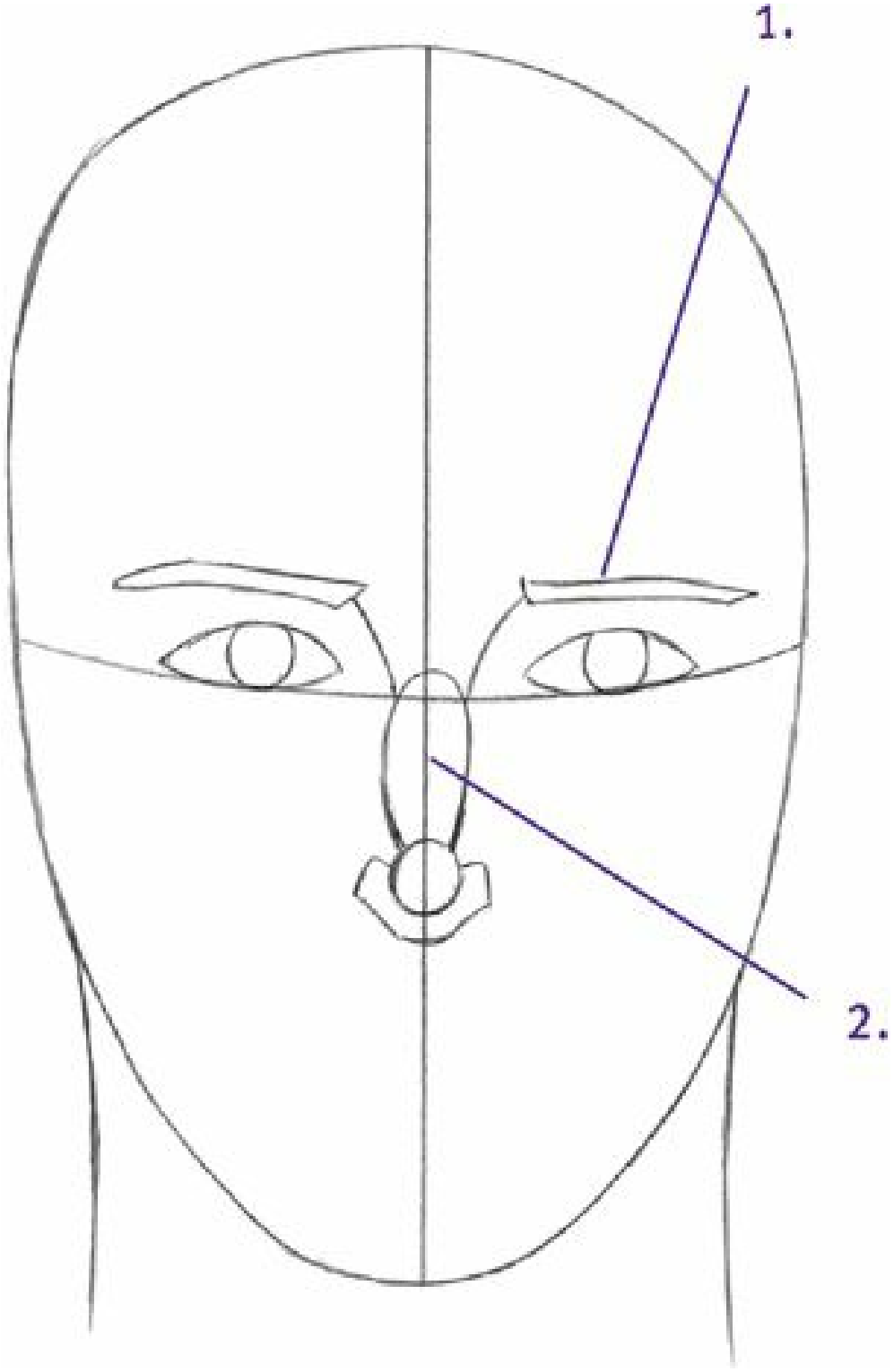
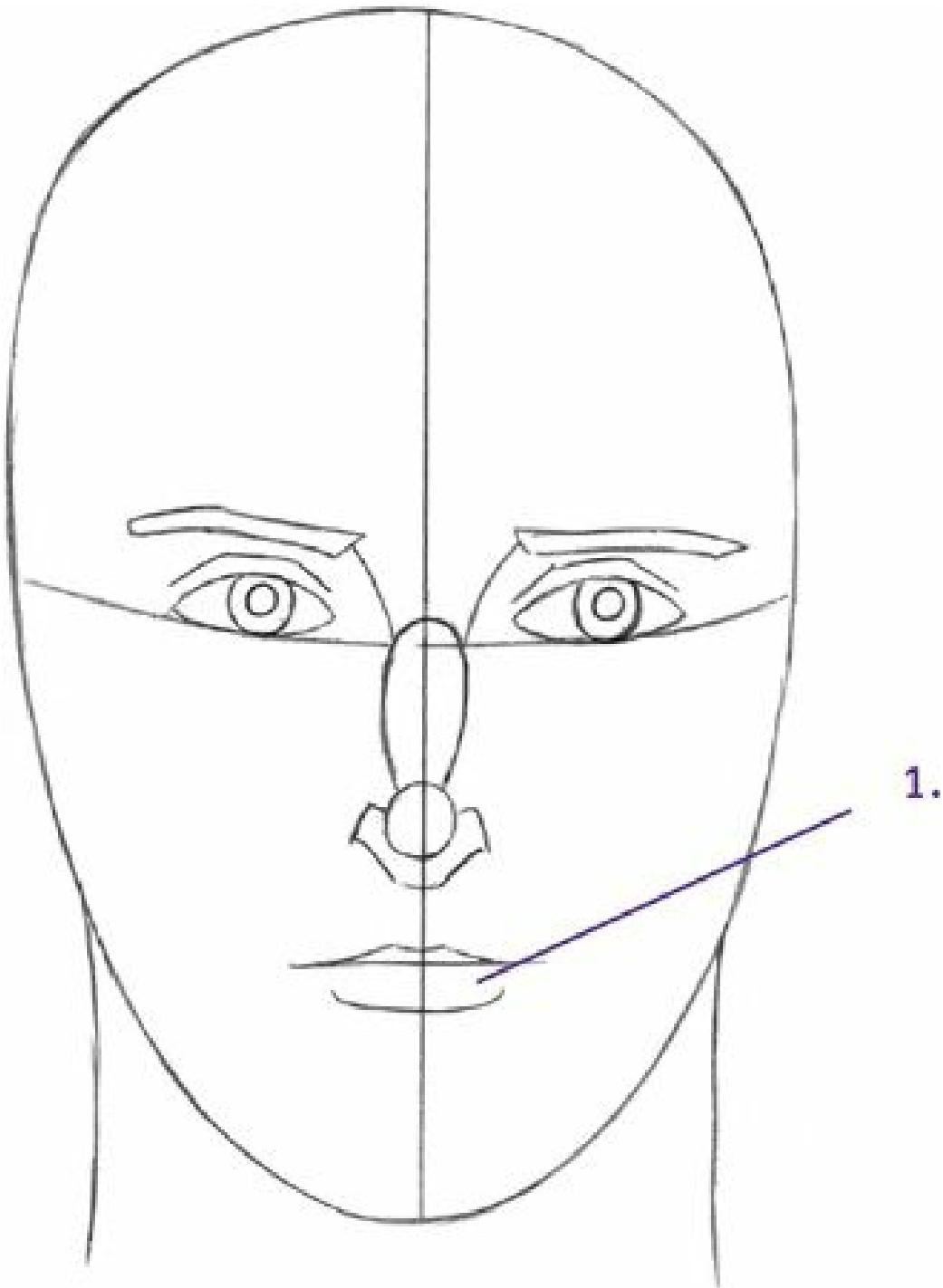
4.

1. Start with the simple egg shape.
2. Place the eyes an even distance apart on the eye line.
3. Lower the jawline in order to broaden the face just enough to create the image of a character that exudes self-assuredness.
4. The wide neck is in keeping with the theme of a physically confident male.

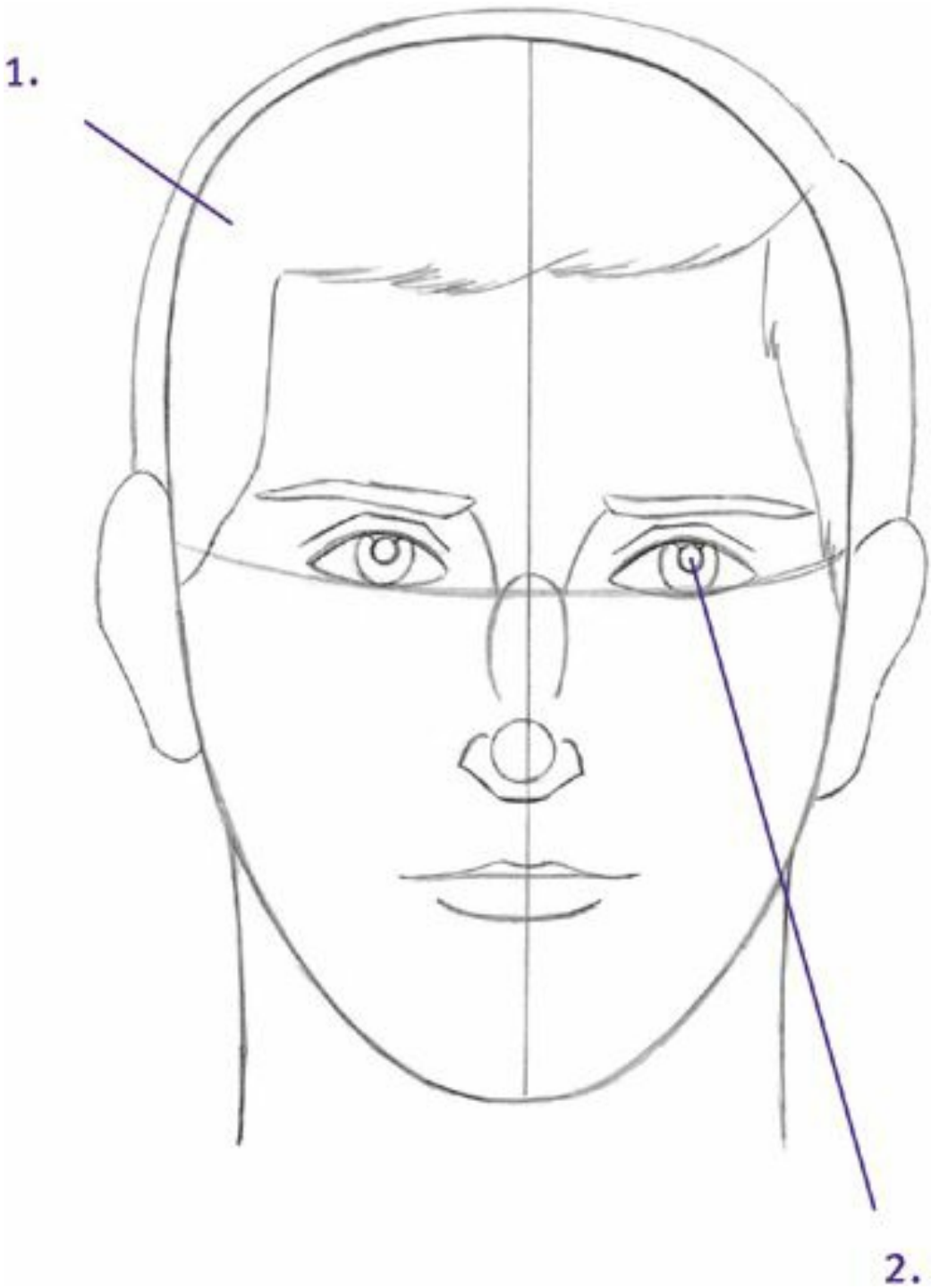

1.
2.

1. Masculine eyebrows are usually placed low so that they hover just over the eyes.
2. A carefully placed nose is the centerpiece of symmetry on the face.



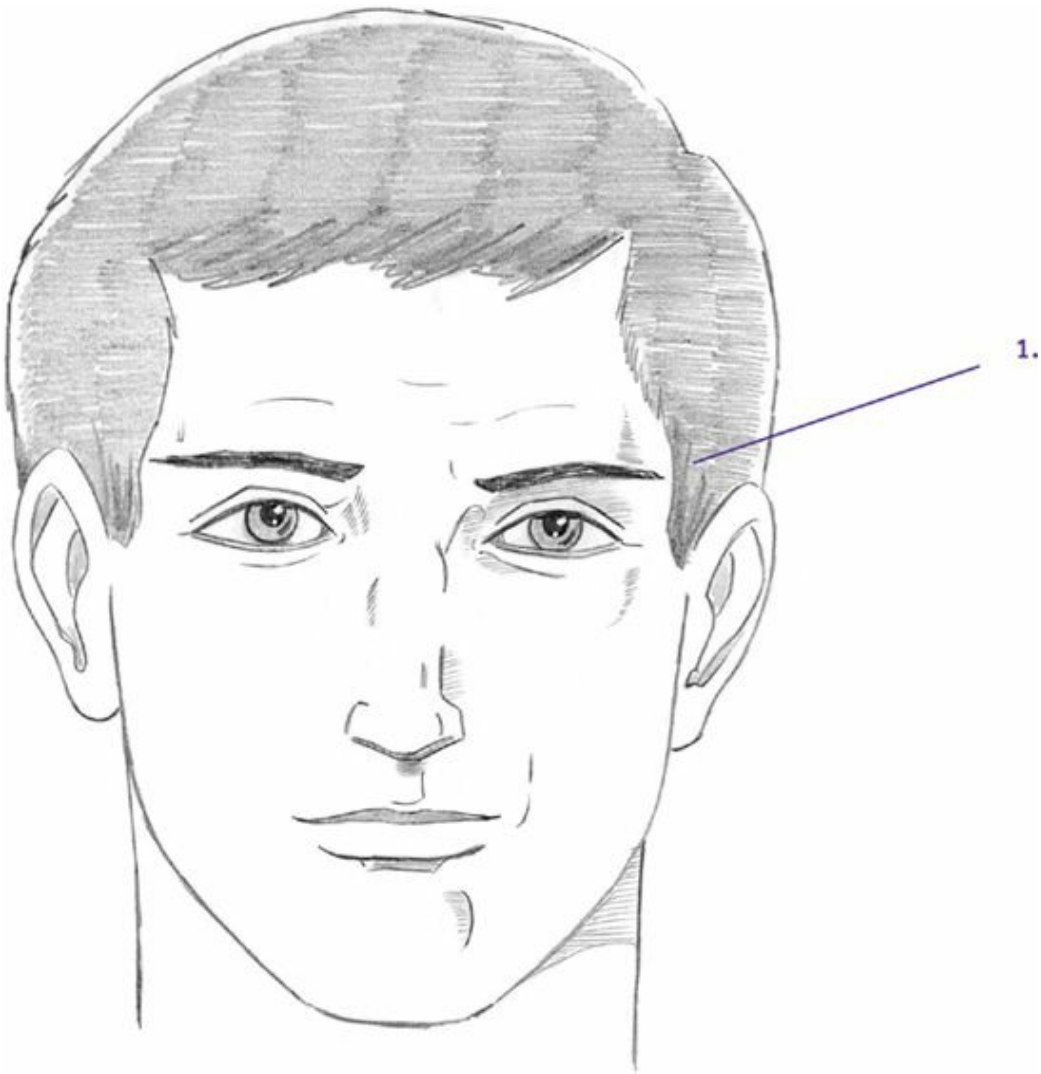
1. By placing the mouth close to the nose, we've created a large area

for a powerful-looking chin.



1. The hair, brushed to one side in a carefree way, softens the

appearance of the character. We want the hair to look natural, not stiff.
2. Add a slight shadow under the eyelids. This subtle technique is important, as it prevents the character from appearing to stare.

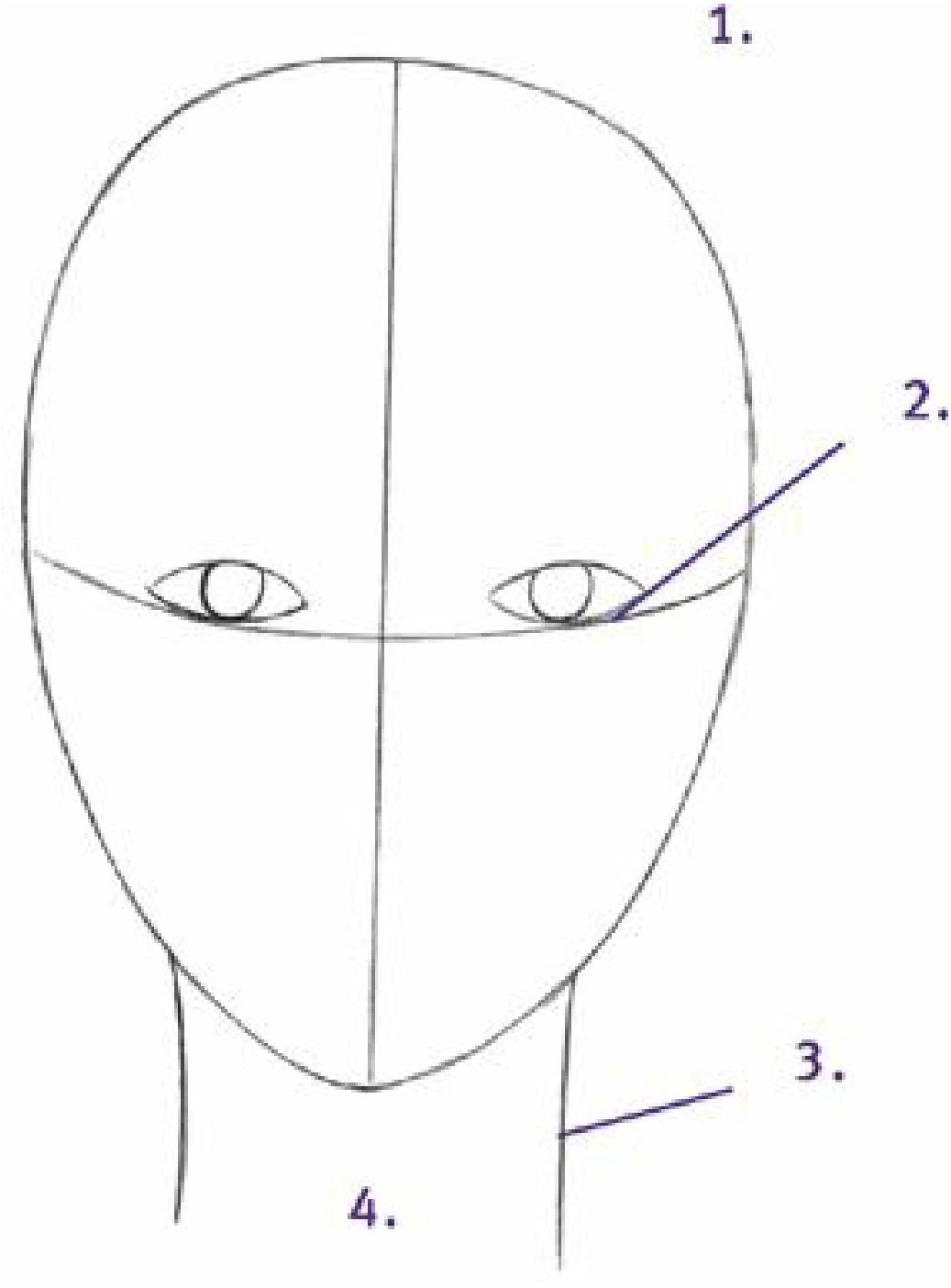


1. Note the slight touch of shadow, effectively added at various places to the features.

A few facial creases have been judiciously added to the final drawing, including folds under the eyes, a smile line, forehead lines, and an articulation of the chin.

Female

When drawing a front view, don't shy away from portraying the subject as though she were looking directly at the viewer. The straight-ahead look communicates a degree of openness. That said, it's not a requirement that a character make eye contact. Eyes cast downward read as reflective, or even sad. Eyes looking into the distance can appear hopeful or wistful. Keep in mind, though, that a hard shift of the eyes to the side in a front view can be misinterpreted as cunning or scheming.

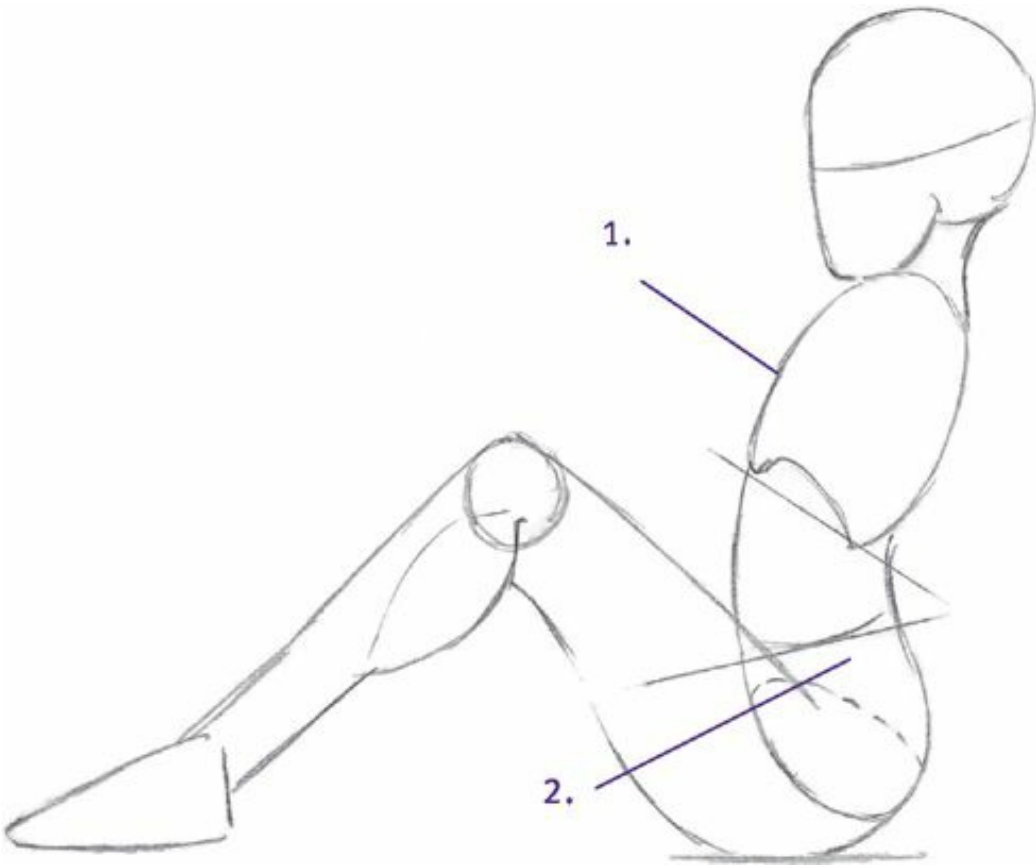


1. Egg-shaped head

2. Eyes placed on the eye line
3. The lines of the neck are curved, not straight, for a feminine look.
4. Tapered chin

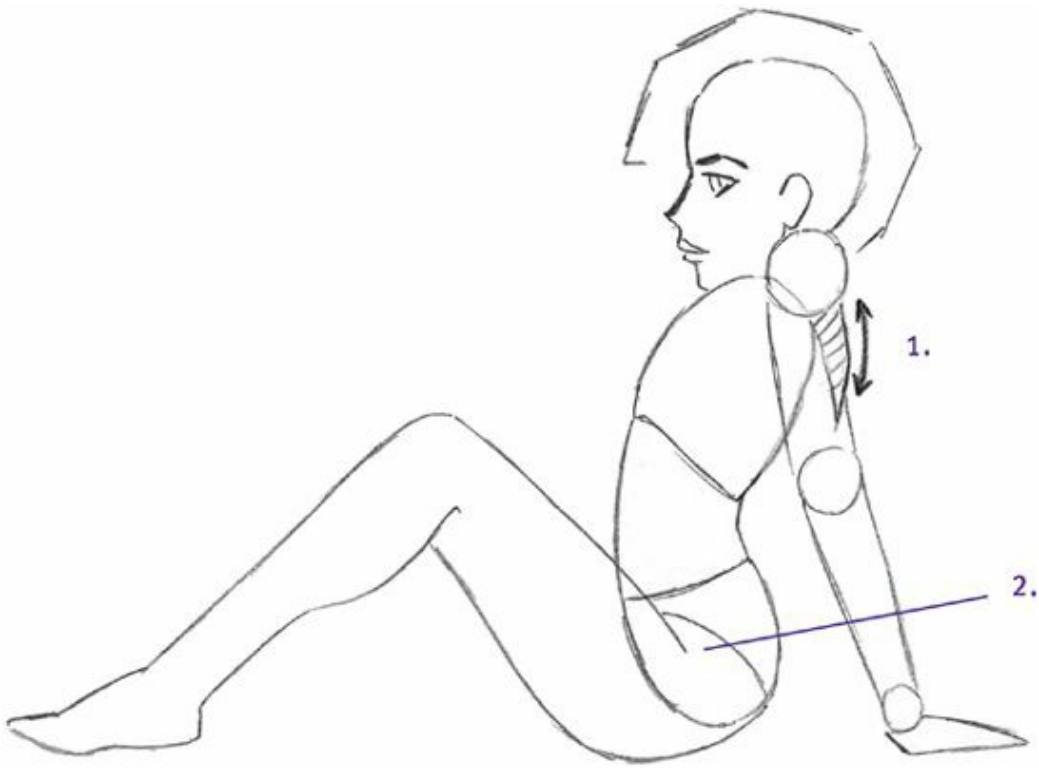
This pose looks natural because we have avoided the artist's pitfall known as *twinning*. Twinning is when the arms or legs mirror each other in a pose. This can result in one leg appearing to hide behind the other, making the model look as if she has a missing limb! By moving the far knee up a few notches, the pose takes on an asymmetrical look.

The arms present no problem for us because they are spread apart and in no danger of masking one behind the other.



1. Rib cage angles up.
2. Hips angle down.

1. Shoulders push up to support torso.



1. Triceps flex.
2. Leg wedges deeply into hip area.

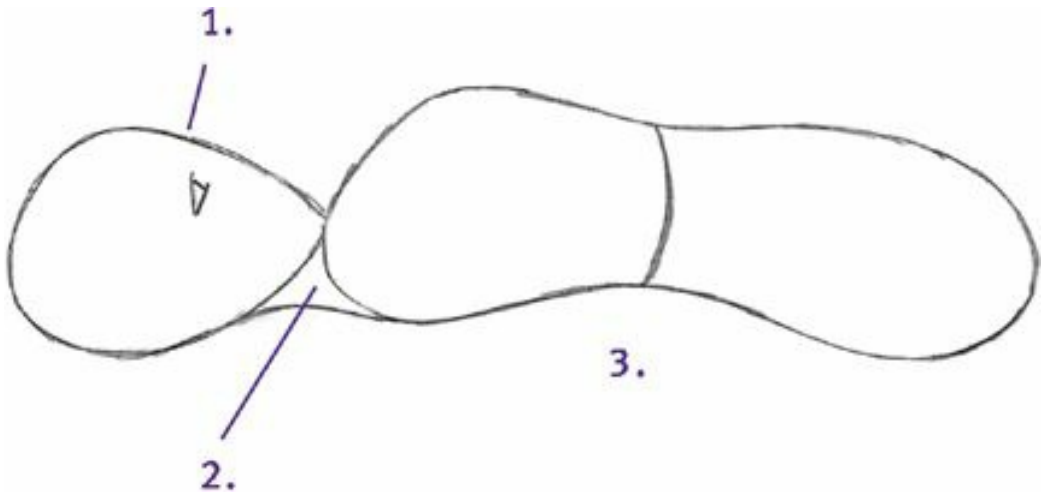
One well-established technique for creating dynamic poses is using diagonally positioned elements, as opposed to horizontal lines. Note the abundance of diagonal lines built into the construction of the pose.

Even though this is a side view, it helps the image if we turn the body ever so slightly, so we see a hint of the center line, which makes the figure look rounder.

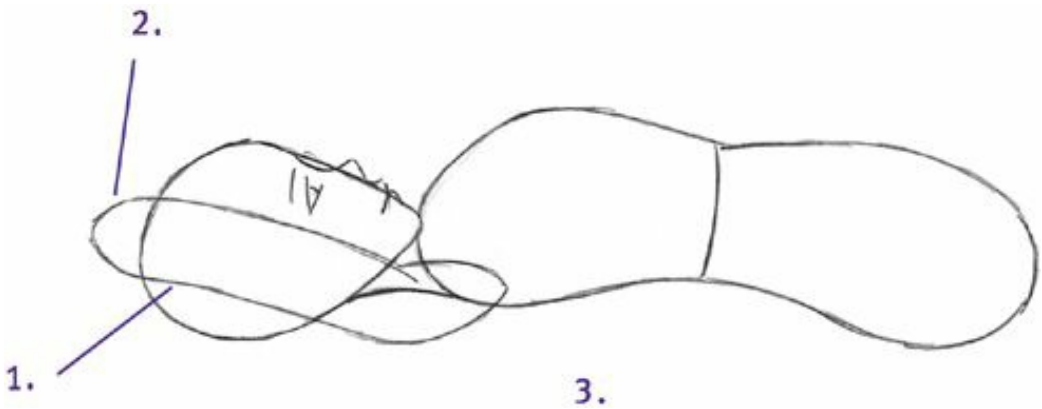
Note the subtle additions of cast shadows, which add depth to the image.

Reclined Pose – Female

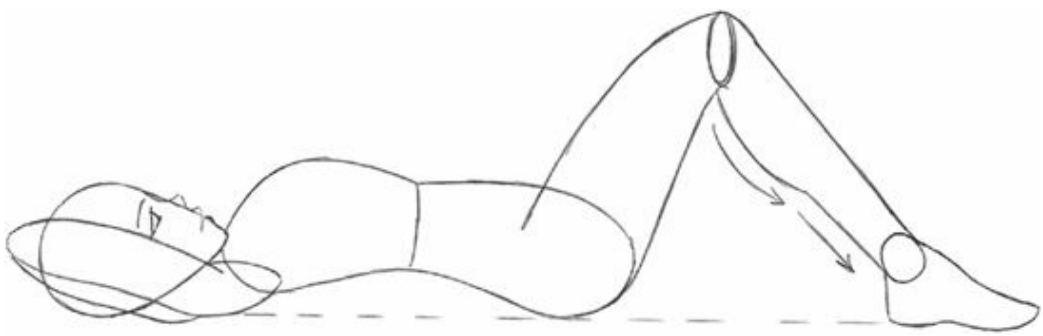
This pose is fairly straightforward. However, it also includes some extreme foreshortening at the arms, which needs to be handled correctly in order to appear effective. And surprisingly, that means simplifying it significantly.



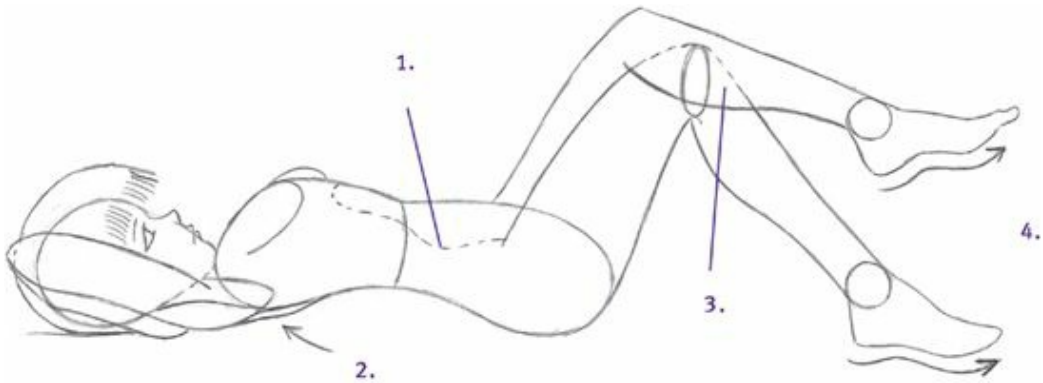
1. Front of the face shows a slight angle downward.
2. Leave space here for the shoulder.
3. Arch the back.



1. Arm rises off the ground.
2. Eliminate forearm entirely.
3. Shoulder protrudes significantly, and is drawn on the same level as the hips, which both make hard contact with the ground.



The dotted line indicates that the shoulder, hips, and foot all appear on the same level. Sometimes I'll even use a light sketch line to indicate the floor before I begin to draw the figure in order to ensure that my sketch keeps everything on the same plane.



1. Show a contour line that hollows out the rib cage and then travels down to the midsection, ending at the hips.
2. Subtly indicate the shoulder blade.
3. Calf muscle bulges when compressed.
4. Always show the curvy contours of women's feet, on the top as well as the bottom.

Place a shadow wherever the body makes contact with the ground.

QUICK TIP Simplified Shapes

By observing the simplified shapes of the rib cage and hips—specifically, the hollowed-out interior areas—you can see why the contour lines take the route that they do. And once you understand it, you can draw it.

PRACTICE: Drawing a Dynamic Life Figure

By adding a few new elements to your conventional figure, from interpretive shadows to an abstract background, you can produce artwork that is original, appealing, and creatively satisfying.

For our final figure, I've taken a dramatic pose and captured it at a key moment in time. The viewer senses that the figure cannot hold this pose, which creates a feeling of anticipation.

In order to evoke more from the subject, we'll apply expressive rather than literal shading. I've enlarged the shaded areas and connected them so that they bleed into one another.

Once that's done, I've blackened them, eliminating any shades of gray. The effect obliterates much of the line work, which then becomes implied rather than articulated. As a result, the figure attains a mythic, sun-scorched appearance.

You may choose to draw this as shown here, or without the interpretive effects, if you wish, which would result in a standard figure drawing. But perhaps you'd enjoy a third option: Consider coming up with your own interpretive shadows by imagining the light source on the upper left side of the page, instead of coming from the upper right side, where it is now.

Simplified diagram of the figure

Detailed construction

Note the natural "flow" of the pose (the classic "reverse curve").

Using only line work, outline where you would like the shadows to fall by generally following the contours of the body. Indicate other shadowed areas where the body blocks the light. To do this, you have to choose the position of the light source. I imagine that the light is coming from overhead, somewhere off to the right. That means the shadows on the body will be cast to the left.

QUICK TIP Building the Foot

Detail of the foot in position. Note the outward curve of the bridge of the foot. It's a feminine look.

Construction of the foot. Note that the bridge of the foot wedges into the top of the toes. The toes are drawn along a curved guideline.

By blending the shadows together, they do more than just serve a function; they actually become part of the design.

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yacht